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COMMENTARIES

ON THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

VOL. V.

ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI.

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THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY,

INSTITUTED IN MAY M.DCCC.XLIII.

FOR THE PUBLICATION OF TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JOHN CALVIN.

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COMMENTARIES

ON THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN.

BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN,

VICAR OF THRUSSINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.

VOLUME FIFTH.

ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY

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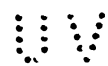

"CALVIN WAS AN ILLUSTRIOUS PERSON, AND NEVER TO BE MENTIONED WITHOUT A PREFACE OF THE HIGHEST HONOUR."—BISHOP ANDREWS.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THIS Volume completes CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES on the TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS,—a Work which, had he written no other, would have been sufficient to have rendered him illustrious as a faithful, lucid, and practical expounder. In course of time, when his Comments shall be carefully read, his high merits will no doubt be duly acknowledged. The Translator can bear this testimony, that before he read CALVIN on the Minor Prophets, it was to him one of the least interesting and the least instructive portions of the ancient Scriptures; but that he finds it now one of the most interesting. It practically exhibits to us especially two things, which it greatly concerns us all to know,—what God is, and what man is. It sets before us manifest facts which prove the wonderful mercy and forbearance of God, and also the amazing tendency of man to superstition, and his persistency in his course notwithstanding all the powerful means adopted for his restoration.

ZECHARIAH began to prophesy two months after HAGGAI, as we find by comparing Hag. i. 15, with Zech. i. 1. Ezra mentions them as the two Prophets who encouraged the rebuilding of the Temple. Ezra v. 1; vi. 14.

The greatest part of ZECHARIAH was written, according to *Lowth*, in prose; but he adds that "some parts about the

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end of his Prophecy (ch. ix. x. and the beginning of xi.) are poetical and highly embellished, and that they are sufficiently perspicuous, though written by a Prophet, who of all is perhaps the most obscure."[1] The testimony of *Jerome*, as to his obscurity, is the same; he says that he is "the most obscure as well as the longest of the Twelve Minor Prophets." *Marckius* concedes a majestic elegance to his diction, and says, that "his enigmatical symbols may be fitly compared with those of AMOS, EZEKIEL, DANIEL, and of JOHN, the Prophet of the New Testament." "His prose," according to *Henderson*, "resembles most that of EZEKIEL; it is diffuse, uniform and repetitious. His prophetic poetry possesses much of the elevation and dignity to be found in the earlier Prophets, with whose writings he appears to have been familiar."

The Book contains *four* parts: the *first* is a short message to the Jews, ch. i. 1-6; the *second* includes the rest of the first six chapters, which record a series of eight visions confined to one single night, and vouchsafed to the Prophet three months after the first message; the *third* contains two chapters, the seventh and the eighth; and the *fourth*, the six remaining chapters.

Since the days of CALVIN a dispute has arisen, originated by *Mede*, respecting this last portion. Owing especially to a quotation in Matt. xxvii. 9, 10, where JEREMIAH, and not ZECHARIAH, is mentioned, many since the time of *Mede*, such as *Hammond*, *Newcome*, and several German divines, have adopted the notion, that these chapters have somehow been misplaced, and that they belong to the book of JEREMIAH. This view has been strongly opposed by *Blayney* and others, who, together with *Scott*, *Adam Clarke*, and *Hender-*

[1] Sunt aliqua sub ejus Vaticinii finem (vide cap. ix. x. et init. xi.) et poetica et valdè ornata, et, ut in Vate omnium fortasse obscurissimo, satis perspicua.—*Præl.* xxi.

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son, consider that there is no sufficient ground for such a supposition, and who for various reasons think that there is a typographical mistake in Matthew.[1]

"It is alleged," observes *Blayney*, "that the Evangelist St. Matthew, ch. xxvii. 9, cites a passage found in Zech. xi. 13, as spoken, not by ZECHARIAH, but by the Prophet JEREMIAH. But is it not possible, nay, is it not much more probable, that the word *Ιερεμιου* may have been written by mistake by some transcribers of MATTHEW'S Gospel, than that those of the Jewish Church, who settled the Canon of Scripture, of whom ZECHARIAH himself is supposed to have been one, should have been so grossly ignorant of the right author of those chapters as to place them under a wrong name? It is not, I think, pretended that these chapters have been found in any copy of the Old Testament otherwise placed than as they now stand. But in the New Testament there are not wanting authorities for omitting the word *Ιερεμιου*."

The other arguments urged by *Mede* and others are successfully combated by *Blayney* as well as by *Henderson*.

[1] "AUGUSTINE mentions that in his time some MSS. omitted the name of *Ιερμίου*. It is also omitted in the MS. 33, 157; in the Syriac, which is the most ancient of all the versions. . . . . The Greek MS. 22, reads *Ζαχαρίου*, as also do the Philoxenian Syriac in the margin, and the Arabic MS. quoted by BENGEL. ORIGEN and EUSEBIUS, were in favour of this reading. I think it very probable that Matthew did not insert either name, but simply wrote in his Hebrew gospel ביד הנביא, *by the Prophet*, just as in chap. i. 22; ii. 5, 15; xiii. 35; xxi. 4; xxvii. 35; and that his Greek Translator, mistaking ד in ביד for ר, read ביר, which he considered to be a contraction for בירמיהו, and so rendered it *διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου*. This reading having found its way into the first Greek MS. will account for its all but universal propagation. Another conjecture supposes *Ἱριου* to have been written by some early copyist instead of *Ζριου*."—*Henderson*.

The notion of HENGSTENBERG, derived from a hint by GROTIUS, is too subtle and refined. He supposes that Matthew intentionally ascribed the words to JEREMIAH, in order to show that Zechariah's prediction was but a repetition of what Jeremiah had foretold in chap. xviii. and xix., and to intimate that it would be followed by a similar judgment. But this sort of reasoning is too abstruse and artificial to be admitted.

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The first is, that many things are mentioned in these chapters which correspond not with ZECHARIAH'S time; the second, that the prophecy in ch. xi. concerning the destruction of the Temple and of the people, is not suitable to the scope of ZECHARIAH'S commission, which was to encourage the people to build the Temple; and the third, that the style of these chapters is different from that of the preceding ones. These reasons, especially the two last, are justly said to be easily accounted for by the supposition that ZECHARIAH wrote the former portions while he was young, (ch. ii. 4,) and these chapters in his advanced years. And *Blayney* thinks that he is the ZECHARIAH mentioned by our Saviour in Matt. xxiii. 35, and that he was slain by the Jews on account of these prophecies which he announced in his old age.[1]

The last of the Old Testament Prophets, as admitted by all, was MALACHI. Who and what he was, we are left without any knowledge. Some have supposed him to have been EZRA under another name, or under the name of his office, as MALACHI means a messenger. But most think that he lived near a century after HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH. *Usher* places him in the year 416 before Christ, and *Blair* in 436. It appears certain from ch. iii. 10, that his time was after the building of the Temple. It is most probable that he was contemporary with NEHEMIAH, especially after his second return from Persia, as the same things are condemned by both,—foreign marriages and the neglect of paying tythes. The Jews are wont to call him the seal (חותם) of the Prophets.

It is observed by *Lowth* that MALACHI wrote "in a middle sort of style, and evidently in such a style as seems to prove that Hebrew poetry had declined since the Babylonian exile,

[1] What seems to strengthen this supposition is, that in this case the *first* and the *last* martyr, previous to his time, are mentioned by our Saviour.

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and that being now in advanced age it was somewhat verging towards senility."[1] But *Henderson* speaks in a higher strain, "Considering the late age in which he lived, the language of Malachi is pure; his style possesses much in common with the old Prophets, but is distinguished more by its animation than by its rhythmus or grandeur."

The interesting character of the COMMENTARY will be found to be in no degree diminished in this Volume, but on the contrary increased, though some of the subjects had been before discussed. The same thoughts, no doubt, sometimes occur, but their different connections ever introduce some variety. The Commentator follows his text, and very seldom deviates from what it strictly requires, and the application of it to present circumstances is generally natural and obvious, and for the most part confined to a few sentences; so the reader's attention is not diverted from the passage that is explained. The main object throughout seems to be to interpret God's Word and to impress it on the mind and heart, and so to apply it as to render it the rule of our life and the support of our hopes.

The curious reader, fond of novelties, and enamoured with speculative and fanciful notions, or one whose chief delight is in dry criticisms, will not find much in CALVIN to gratify him: but those who possess a taste for Divine Truth, who seek to understand what they read, and desire to be fed by "the sincere milk of the Word," will, through a blessing from above, be abundantly compensated by a careful perusal of his Comments. This is not said merely as a matter of inference from the character of their contents, but as the

[1] Prophetarum ultimus Malachius medio quodam dicendi genere utitur, atque ejusmodi plane, quod arguere videatur poesin Hebræam inde a captivitate Babylonica deflorescentem, et inclinata jam ætate in senium quodammodo vergentem.—*Præl.* xxi.

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result of personal experience. The testimony which the Translator can fully bear is similar to that of Bishop HORNE, when he finished his Commentary on the Psalms, that the labour has been attended with so much pleasure and enjoyment, that the completion of his work occasions regret as well as joy; for the time during which he has been engaged in translating CALVIN has been the happiest period of his life.

As to the INDICES, added to this Volume, the most important is that to the subjects: and it is more useful than general readers may perhaps consider it to be. The very reading of it may convey no small measure of information. The variety of subjects handled in these Volumes is very great, so that they include almost everything in the wide range of Theology, not indeed discussed at large, but briefly touched upon and explained.

But as an illustration of the usefulness of this Index, let the word *Faith* be taken; and almost everything connected with it will be found mentioned and referred to. Turn again to the word *Faithful*, (*Fideles*,) which some of my co-workers have rendered *Believers*, and perhaps in some instances more appropriately; and hardly anything belonging to the character, spirit, life, and trials of God's people, will be found wanting. If there be a wish to know what Popery is, what is found under the word *Papists* will disclose almost the whole character of the system; and by referring to the Comment all its main lineaments will be found clearly exhibited in the character of the superstitions and idolatries of the Jews. The real features of errors are the same in every age, only somewhat modified by a change of circumstances: but an enlightened observer can read Popery in the history of the ancient Jews as clearly as in its own history. This of course cannot be done by the spiritually blind and the deluded; and yet so striking and palpable is the likeness in

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not a few instances, that it is impossible for any not to see it, except they be totally blind, and their judgment wholly perverted.

There have been many Commentators before and after the time of CALVIN, but it may be doubted whether any of them possessed his combined excellencies, especially the capacity of being so plain as to be understood by common readers, and of being at the same time so profound as to be interesting and instructive to the most learned; so that his Comments do in this respect retain, in a measure, the character of the book he interprets and explains. Of his superiority over his predecessors we have the striking testimony of the learned *Arminius*, who, as he differed from him on several points of no small importance, may justly be considered to have been an impartial witness. His words are remarkable,—"Next to the reading of Scripture, which I strongly recommend, I advise you to read the Commentaries of Calvin, on whom I bestow higher eulogies than Helmichius did; for I consider that he is *incomparable* in interpreting Scripture, and that his Commentaries are of more value than all that the library of the Fathers transmits to us; so that I concede to him even a spirit of prophecy superior to that of most, yea, of all others."[1]

As to posterior Commentators, his comparative merits cannot indeed be rated so high, as there have been in later years Writers in this department of no ordinary character. Not to mention Foreign Divines, our own might with advantage be referred to, such as *Henry, Lowth, Whitby, Dod-*

[1] Post Scripturæ lectionem, quàm vehementer inculco, ad Calvini Commentarios legendos adhortor, quem laudibus majoribus extollo quam ipse Helmichius; dico enim incomparabilem esse in interpretatione Scripturæ, et majoris faciendos ipsius Commentarios, quàm quicquid Patrum Bibliotheca nobis tradit; adeo ut et spiritum aliquem prophetiæ eximium illi præ aliis plerisque, imo et omnibus, concedam. See *Merits of Calvin*, p. 51.

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dridge, Scott, and *Adam Clarke.* And yet none of these can be regarded as in all respects equal to CALVIN as a Commentator. Some of them excel him as Critics, and others in the number of their practical deductions; but he surpasses them all in pointing out and illustrating the main drift of a passage, in catching as it were its very spirit, and in the power he possessed of impressing on the mind in a few words both its meaning and its practical lessons. The Comment never diverts us from the Text, it never occupies as it were its place; but the Text itself, expounded and illustrated, is left fixed and riveted on the mind.

J. O.

THRUSSINGTON, *July* 1849.

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CALVIN'S PREFACE TO ZECHARIAH.

THE PROPHECIES of ZECHARIAH come next. He was a fellow-helper and colleague of HAGGAI, and also of MALACHI, as it will presently appear. These three, then, were sent by God nearly at the same time, that they might assist one another, and that they might thus by one consent and one mouth confirm what God had committed to them. It was indeed of great service that several bore their testimony: their prophecies gained thus greater authority; and this was needful, for the people had to contend with various and most grievous trials. Satan had already raised up great opposition to them; but there were still greater evils at hand. Hence, to prevent them from despairing, it was necessary to encourage them by many testimonies.

But what our Prophet had especially in view was, to remind the Jews why it was that God dealt so severely with their fathers, and also to animate them with hope, provided they really repented, and elevated their minds to the hope of true and complete deliverance. He at the same time severely reproves them; for there was need of much cleansing, as they still continued in their filth. For though the recollection of their exile ought to have restrained them, and to have made them carefully to fear and obey God, yet it seemed to have been otherwise; and it will appear more fully as we proceed, that being not conscious of having been punished for their sins, they were so secure, that there was

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among them hardly any fear of God, or hardly any religion. It was therefore needful to blend strong and sharp reproofs with promises of favour, that they might thus be prepared to receive Christ. This is the substance of the whole.[1] I shall now proceed to the words.

[1] The following is taken from The Assembly's Annotations, slightly altered:—

He prophesied in Darius's
- 2d year,
  - 8th month, chap. i. 1-6.
  - 11th month, 24th day, ch. i. 7, to ch. vii.
- 4th year, 9th month, 4th day, ch. vii. to the end.

He speaks in
- Types, partly,
  - Hortatory,
    - Generally, to all the people, ch. i. and ii.
    - Specially,
      - to Joshua, ch. iii.
      - to Zerubbabel, ch. iv.
  - Monitory, concerning false prophets, ch. v.
  - Consolatory, concerning Christ, ch. vi.
- Plain speech, handling their state,
  - Present, in answering questions about fasting, ch. vii. and viii.
  - Future,
    - Under Christ
      - Incarnate, ch. ix. and x.
      - Crucified, ch. xi., xii., and xiii.
    - After Christ, ch. xiv.

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

CHAPTER I.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-fourth.

1. In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

2. The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

3. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

1. Mense octavo,[1] anno secundo Darii, fuit sermo Iehovæ ad Zachariam, filium Barachiæ, filii Addo (Iddo, *ad verbum*,) prophetæ, (*vel*, prophetam,)[2] dicendo,

2. Iratus est Iehova erga patres vestros ira.

3. Dices igitur ad eos, Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Revertimini ad me, dicit Iehova exercituum; et revertar ad vos, dicit Iehova exercituum.

We here learn what we have already stated,—that Haggai and Zechariah were by God joined together, that they might confirm each other's doctrine, for they had to do with a refractory people: besides, the people had to endure hard

[1] "This month, according to the sacred reckoning which begins the year with the month Abib or Nizan, (Ex. xii. 2,) falls in with the latter part of October and the beginning of November."—*Blayney*.

[2] This refers no doubt to Zechariah, and not to Iddo, according to the usual order adopted in Hebrew, and also because the object is to show that Zechariah, and not Iddo, was a prophet. It is a name given, as *Cocceius* observes, not only to him who announces future things, but to every one who as God's minister proclaims his words, explains spiritual things, and applies them to the conscience.—*Ed.*

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and arduous trials, so that they needed more than a common testimony to confirm them. Haggai commenced the work of his office in the *sixth* month; Zechariah shortly followed him, in the *eighth* month of the same year. It has already been shown who was the Darius mentioned here; though some interpreters dissent, we may yet learn from certain and indubitable proofs, that he was the son of Hystaspes. We shall again speak of this Darius, when a better occasion will offer itself: I wished only in passing to say thus much.

The word of Jehovah came to Zechariah. We have already said that the word of God comes in two ways to men. God addresses all from the least to the greatest; but in the first place he sends his word especially to his Prophets, to whom he commits the office of teaching. The word of God thus comes to private individuals, and it comes also to teachers, who sustain a public character, and become God's interpreters or messengers. It was thus that God's word came to Zechariah, not that he might keep to himself what God had said, but that he might be a faithful dispenser of his truth.

With regard to Zechariah, they are mistaken who regard him as the son of Jehoiadah, mentioned by Christ in Matt. xxiii. 35. Zechariah is indeed said there to have been killed between the temple and the altar, and he is called the son of Barachiah:[1] but the counting of years will easily prove their mistake, who would have him to be the same Zechariah. The former, who is called in sacred history the son of Jehoiadah the priest, was slain under Joash. Let us now see how many kings succeeded him, and also how many years he reigned. That Zechariah must have been almost two hundred years old at the Babylonian exile, if he was alive, had he been a boy when he was stoned. Now this Zechariah, of whom we now speak, performed the office of a Prophet after the return of the people from exile. He must then have been not only more than a hundred and fifty years of age, but must have exceeded two hundred years when he died. The idea respecting the renascence of men, being a

[1] He is called the son of Iddo by Ezra, ch. v. 1; but the word son, in Hebrew, means often a grandson or a descendant: "Omnes qui in gradibus descendentibus sunt Hebræi *filios* vocant."—*Grotius.*

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reverie of the Jews, is not worthy of a record, much less of a refutation. He is however called the son of Barachiah; but the probable conjecture is that Jehoiadah the priest had two names, and it does not appear that he was a prophet. However this may be, the Zechariah who was stoned in the temple by the order of the king, was the son of the high priest, and died more than a hundred years before the Babylonian exile: but this Zechariah, had he been sixty before he undertook the office of teaching, was not yet born when the people were driven into exile. For we have said that this Darius was not the Mede who reigned with Cyrus, but the son of Hystaspes, who reigned a long time after, that is, after Cambyses and the Magi. Their want of knowledge is easily proved, who think that these Prophets were sent by God before the completion of the time mentioned by Jeremiah. As then the seventy years had elapsed, this Prophet was no doubt born after the time when the city was destroyed, the temple pulled down, and the people led captive into Babylon. I come now to the doctrine itself.

Angry was Jehovah with anger against your fathers.[1] The Prophet here refers to the severity of the punishment with which the Jews had been visited, in order that posterity might know that God, who so rigidly punishes the despisers of his word and instruction, ought not to be provoked. For by saying that God was angry with anger, he means, that God was in no common measure offended with the Jews, and that the very grievousness of their punishment was a clear evidence how displeased God was with them. But the object of the Prophet was to rouse the Jews, that they might begin seriously to fear God on seeing how dreadful is his wrath. The Apostle states it as a general truth, that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, (Heb. x. 30:) so also the Scripture speaks everywhere. But Zechariah mentions here to his own people a signal evidence

[1] The words may be thus rendered,—
Wroth was Jehovah,
With your fathers was he wroth.
This is more consistent with the character of the Hebrew language than the usual rendering.

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of God's wrath, which ought justly to have smitten all of them with terror. He does not then speak here of a thing unknown, but reminds them seriously to consider how terrible is God's vengeance; as a proof of this, their fathers had been deprived of their perpetual inheritance, they had suffered many degradations, and had also been harassed and oppressed by tyrants; in short, they had been nearly sunk in the lowest depths. Since then God had so severely dealt with their fathers, the Prophet bids them to know that God ought to be feared, lest they should grow wanton or indulge themselves in their usual manner, but that they might from the heart repent, and not designedly provoke God's wrath, of which their fathers had so severe an experience.

It then follows, *Thou shalt say to them, Return ye to me, and I will return to you.*[1] The Prophet now expresses more clearly for what purpose he had spoken of God's vengeance, with which he had visited his chosen people, even that their posterity might take heed to themselves; for the common proverb, "Fools by adversity become wise," ought in this case to have been verified. For where there is really a teachable spirit, men become instantly attentive to what God says: but even when they are sluggish and slothful, it is a wonder, that when they are smitten, the strokes which they feel do not shake off at least in some degree their torpor. Hence the Prophet, after having spoken of the punishments which God had inflicted, exhorts the Jews to repentance.

It ought however to be observed, that our Prophet not only speaks of repentance, but shows also its true character, that the Jews might not seek carelessly to please God, as is commonly the case, but that they might sincerely repent; for he says, *return ye to me, and I will return to you.* And

[1] The verb, שׁוּב, means to turn, and to return. *Newcome* retains our version, "turn," but *Marckius* and *Henderson* adopt with *Calvin* the word "return," though *Henderson*, in ver. 4, has "turn." The most suitable rendering seems to be "return," as it intimates a departure, which was the case in both instances, with respect to the people, and also with respect to God. They had departed from God, and God had departed from them; they had also departed from God's ways. "Return" therefore is the most appropriate term.—*Ed.*

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this was not said without reason, when we consider in what sort of delusions the Jews indulged themselves immediately after their return. We have seen that they became devoted to their private concerns, while the temple remained desolate; and we also know what sacred history relates, that they married heathen women, and also that many corruptions prevailed among them, so that religion almost disappeared. They indeed retained the name of God, but their impiety showed itself by clear signs. It is then no wonder that the Prophet sharply stimulates them to repentance.

It must at the same time be noticed, that we cannot enjoy the favour of God, even when he kindly offers to be reconciled to us, except we from the heart repent. However graciously, then, God may invite us to himself, and be *ready to* remit our sins, we yet cannot embrace his offered favour, except our sins become hateful to us; for God ceases not to be our judge, except we anticipate him, and condemn ourselves, and deprecate the punishment of our sins. Hence we then pacify God when real grief wounds us, and we thus really turn to God, without dissimulation or falsehood. Now the experience of God's wrath ought to lead us to this; for extremely heedless are they who, having found God to be a Judge, do carelessly disregard his wrath, which ought to have filled their hearts with fear. "Let no one deceive you with vain words," says Paul, "for on account of these things comes the wrath of God on the children of unbelief," or on all the unbelieving. (Eph. v. 6.) Paul bids us to consider all the evidences which God gives of his wrath in the world, that they may instruct us as to the fear of God; how much more then should domestic examples be noticed by us? For the Prophet speaks not here of foreign nations; but he says, *angry has God been with anger against your fathers.* Since, then, it appeared evident that God had not spared even his chosen people, they ought, unless they were in the extreme refractory, to have carefully continued in obedience to the law. Hence the Prophet here condemns their tardiness, inasmuch as they had made so little progress under the chastisements of God.

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We thus see that no excuse can be brought before God, if we do not make a right use of all the punishments by which he designs to recover us from our sins. We have referred to that general truth announced by Paul, that God's judgment, executed on the unbelieving, ought to be feared; it hence follows that our insensibility is extreme, if we are not thoroughly moved when God teaches us by our own experience, or at least when he sets domestic examples before us, as when he punishes our fathers and others connected with us; for this mode of teaching comes much nearer to us.

But when the Prophet says, *return ye to me, and I will return to you*, he means, as I have before stated, that though God meets sinners, and is ready with extended arms to embrace them, his favour cannot come to those to whom it is offered, except a real feeling of penitence leads them to God. In short, the Prophet means, that though they had returned from exile, they could not expect a permanent state of safety, except they turned from the heart to him; for if they imitated their fathers, God had in readiness far severer scourges to chastise them; and they might also be again driven into exile. He then briefly reminds them, that if they wished to enjoy the incomparable kindness with which God had favoured them, it was necessary for them seriously to return to him. Though then God had already in part returned to them, that is, he had really proved that he was pacified and propitious to them, yet he had begun by many evidences to show that he was again offended with them; for their fruit had either withered through heat, or had been smitten by hail, as we have found elsewhere; (Hag. ii. 17;) so that that they had already laboured for several years under want and other evils. God then had not so blessed them, that they could in every way recognise his paternal favour. This is the reason why the Prophet says, *I will return to you* when ye return to me.

We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet to be, that though God had delivered his people, they ought yet to have feared lest his wrath should suddenly burn against the ungrateful and the wicked, and that being not in full favour,

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they ought also to have known that God was still offended with them. So the Prophet shortly reminded them, that it was no wonder that God treated them with no great kindness, for they allowed no place for his favour, but provoked his wrath, like their fathers, inasmuch as they did not from the heart repent.

The Papists allege this passage in defence of free-will; but it is a most puerile sophistry. They say that the turning of God to men is the same as their turning to him, as though God promised the grace of his Spirit as a help, when men anticipate him. They imagine then that free-will precedes, and then that the help of the Spirit follows. But this is very gross and absurd. The Prophet indeed means that God would return to the Jews; for he shows that God would in every respect be a father to them, when they showed themselves to be dutiful and obedient children. We must therefore remember that God does not here promise the aid of his Spirit to assist free-will, and to help the efforts of man, as these foolish and senseless teachers imagine, but that he promises to return to the Jews to bless them. Hence the return of God here is nothing else than the prosperity which they desired; as though he had said—"Fear me from the heart, and ye shall not labour under hunger and thirst; for I shall satisfy you, as neither your fields nor your vines shall hereafter disappoint your hopes. Ye shall find me most bountiful, when ye deal with me in a faithful manner." This is the meaning.

We must further bear in mind, that, according to the common usage of Scripture, whenever God exhorts us to repentance, he does not regard what our capacity is, but demands what is justly his right. Hence the Papists adopt what is absurd when they deduce the power of free-will from the command or exhortation to repent: God, they say, would not have commanded what is not in our power to do. It is a foolish and a most puerile mode of reasoning; for if everything which God requires were in our power, the grace of the Holy Spirit would be superfluous; it would not only be as they say a waiting-maid, but it would be wholly unnecessary; but if men need the aid of the Spirit, it follows

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that they cannot do what God requires from them. But it seems strange that God should bid men to do more than what they can. It seems so indeed, I allow, when we form our judgment according to the common perception of the flesh; but when we understand these truths—that the law works wrath—that it increases sin—that it was given that transgression might be made more evident, then the false notion—that God requires nothing but what men can perform, comes to nothing. But it is enough for us to know, that God in exhorting us to repentance requires nothing but what nature dictates ought to be done by us. Since it is so, however short we are in the performance, it is not right to charge God with too much strictness, that he demands what is beyond our power.

The frequent repetition of God's name by the Prophet is emphatical; it was done, that what he taught might more sharply goad the hearts of the people. Had he simply said, that he had a commission from above to remind the people of the punishments which their fathers had endured, and also to call them to repentance, this mode of teaching would not have so penetrated into their hearts, as when the name of God is so often brought before them—*Thou shalt say, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Return to me, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will return to you, saith Jehovah of hosts.* It surely behoved the Jews, when they heard God's name pronounced three times, to awake and to consider with whom they had to do. For what can be more base or more disgraceful than for men, when God anticipates them and desires to be united to them, to refuse to respond and to devote themselves to his service?

It is at the same time evident, that the Prophet adopted a mode of speaking then in use: and we know that the language of the Jews underwent a change after their Babylonian exile. It lost that clearness and elegance which it possessed before: as it clearly appears from the style of those who wrote after the exile. I allow also that previously the Prophets exhibited not the same degree of eloquence; for Isaiah differs greatly from Jeremiah and from Amos. It is yet quite evident from the writings of the last Prophets,

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that the language had become somewhat muddy after the return of the people from exile. Let us now proceed—

4. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.

4. Ne sitis sicut patres vestri, quia clamârunt ad eos Prophetæ superiores, sic dicit Iehovah exercituum, Revertimini quæso a viis vestris malis, et ab operibus vestris malis; et non audierunt, neque attenderunt ad me, dicit Iehovah.

In order to correct and to subdue the obstinacy of the people, he here upbraids them with having descended from wicked and perverse parents. The Jews, we know, too much flattered themselves; and we know that they were especially inflated with the vain boasting that they derived their origin from the holy fathers. Hence it was, that they proudly gloried in their descent. They did not at the same time consider how much perverseness had been found in many of their fathers. But the Prophet had something else in view. We indeed know that when anything becomes customary, almost all become hardened and flatter themselves in their vice; for immorality is then counted almost as the law, and what is sanctioned by public consent seems lawful. Since then they had not ceased for many years to provoke the wrath of God, it was necessary to add this reproof, *Be not like your fathers:* for they no doubt imagined that God approved of them, as they were not worse than their fathers. But God shows that their fathers had been very wicked and perverse.

Let us learn from this passage, that the examples which are wont to be set up as a shield are so far from being of any weight before God, that they enhance our guilt: and yet we see that this folly infatuates many; for at this day the religion of the Papists seems to them holy and irreprehensible, because it has been handed down to them by their fathers. Hence, whenever they bring forward the fathers, they think it a sufficient defence against the charge of any errors. But nothing occurs more frequently in the Prophets than the truth, that examples tend more to kindle the wrath of God, when some men become the occasion of sin to others,

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and when posterity think that whatever has proceeded from their fathers is lawful.

But we must at the same time bear in mind the design of the Prophet, for he did not intend simply to show, that the Jews in vain alleged the examples of the ancient; but as I have said, he intended to shake off their self-flatteries by which they lulled themselves asleep; and he intended especially to put down those evil practices, which by long use had prevailed among them. This then is the reason why he says, *Be not like your fathers.* The Spirit employs the same sentiment in many other places, especially in the ninety-fifth Psalm, and also in other Psalms.

Then he says, that the *Prophets*, who had been sent by God, had *cried* to their fathers, but that they did not attend. As then contempt of the truth had for so many ages prevailed among the Jews, and as this impiety was not duly abhorred by them, since they thought themselves to be as it were in perpetual possession—these are the reasons why the Prophet expressly upbraids them with this, that God's word had been formerly despised by their nation—*cry* then *did the former Prophets.* He also exaggerates again their crime and their sin, because God had often recalled them to himself but without success. Had the Prophets been silent, and had God applied no remedy for their defection, their ingratitude would not indeed have been excusable; but since Prophets had often been sent to them, in succession, one after other, and each had endeavoured to restore the wretched men to a state of safety, not to attend to their holy and serious admonitions, by which God manifested his care for their wellbeing, was a much more atrocious crime.

We hence learn, that when we find any people prone to this or that vice, it ought to be resisted with greater diligence; for Satan almost always employs this artifice—that when he finds us prone to this or that vice, he directs all his efforts to drive us headlong into it.

As then the Prophets had been for a long time despised by the Jews, Zechariah designedly brings before them that perverseness which had been too long known. *Cry* then *did*

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the *former Prophets*,[1] saying, *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, return ye, I pray, from your evil ways, and from your evil works; but they heard not nor attended.* After having spoken of God's kind invitation, which was a singular pledge of his love, since he thus manifested his concern for their safety, he shows on the other hand how unworthily the Jews had conducted themselves, for they obstinately rejected this favour of God. They were indeed more than sufficiently proved guilty; for by saying, *Return ye, I pray, from your evil ways and from your evil works*, he assumes it as a fact that the reproofs given were just. And he farther says, that they refused to hear. Hence their perverseness was less endurable; for though they were self-condemned, they did not yet repent, nor deigned to hearken to God. And he subjoins the words, *nor did they attend;* for by this repetition[2] is more fully expressed, not only their stupidity, but their strange madness, inasmuch as they had so rejected God, and closed up the door of his favour, as though they sought designedly to drive him far from them, lest he should come to them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only once embraced us in thy paternal bosom, when it pleased thee to offer to us the salvation obtained by the death of thine only-begotten Son, but

[1] This sentence is peculiar in its construction. Our version, "unto whom the former Prophets have cried," gives the meaning, but not the form of the sentence, which perhaps can hardly be done except in *Welsh;* but in that language the idiom is exactly the same. The relative "whom," אשׁר, comes first, then the verb, followed by a pronoun having a preposition prefixed to it—"to them," אליהם. The literal rendering in English would be, "whom they called (or cried) to them, the Prophets the former." The rendering in *Welsh* would be the Hebrew word for word—

Y rhai y galwodd arnynt y prophwydi blaenorol.

CALVIN in his version renders אשׁר, "quia," which is not correct; it ought to have been "quibus."—*Ed.*

[2] It is not perhaps exactly a repetition. *Newcome* retains our version, "hear" and "hearken;" but *Henderson* has "hearken" and "give heed." The first, שׁמע, is the mere act of hearing; but the second, קשׁב, means attention; it signifies to incline the ear so as to listen. The Jews had been unwilling to hear, or to give the least attention to what had been said to them.—*Ed.*

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continuest also daily to invite us to thyself, and also to recall the wandering to the right way—O grant, that we may not always remain deaf and hardened against thy warnings, but bring to thee hearts really submissive, and study so to devote ourselves to thee, that it may be evident that we have not received thy grace in vain; and may we also continue in the constant fruition of it, until we shall at length fully attain that blessed glory, which having been obtained for us, is daily set before us by the teaching of the Gospel, that we may be confirmed in it. May we therefore make such continual advances, through the whole course of our life, that having at last put off all the corruptions of our flesh, we may be really united to thee in that perfect purity to which thou invitest us, and which we hope for, through the grace of thine only Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-five.

5. Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

6. But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

5. Patres vestri, ubi sunt? et prophetæ, an in perpetuum vivent?

6. Atqui verba mea et statuta mea, quæ mandavi servis meis prophetis, annon apprehenderunt patres vestros? et reversi sunt et dixerunt, Sicut cogitaverat Iehova exercituum facere nobis secundum vias nostras, et opera nostra, ita fecit nobiscum.

In what we considered yesterday Zechariah reminded the Jews of the conduct of their fathers, in order that they might not, by their continued sins, bring on themselves new punishments. Many interpreters think that the sentiment contained at the beginning of the fourth verse is now confirmed, *your fathers, where are they?* for it seems to them that God is here exulting over the Jews—"Think now what has happened to your fathers; are they not all gone and destroyed?" They suppose also that the Jews answer, taking the latter clause as spoken by them, "The Prophets also, have they not perished? Why do you mention to us the fathers? There is no difference between them and the Prophets; it is not therefore a suitable argument." And then in the third place, they consider that God refutes the answer given by

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the Jews, "But my words and my statutes, what I had entrusted to the Prophets, have not been without their effect." This view of the passage has been adopted by many, and by all of the most ancient interpreters; and those who followed them have been disposed to subscribe to it.[1] But more probable is the opinion of Jerome, who understands the latter clause of false Prophets,—"Your fathers and your Prophets, where are they?" as though God thus reproved the Jews: "See now, have not your fathers miserably perished, and also the Prophets by whom they were deceived?" Thus Jerome thinks that the object in both clauses is to shake off the delusions of the Jews, that they might not harden themselves against God's judgments, or give ear to flatterers. This interpretation comes nearer to the design of the Prophet, though he seems to me to have something else in view.

I join the two clauses together, as they may be most fitly united—"Your fathers and my Prophets have both perished; but after their death, the memory of the doctrine, which has not only been published by my servants, but has also been fully confirmed, is to continue, so that it ought justly to terrify you; for it is very foolish in you to enquire whether or not the Prophets are still alive; they performed their office to the end of life, but the truth they declared is immortal. Though then the Prophets are dead, they have not yet carried away with them what they taught, for it never perishes, nor can it at any age be extinguished. The ungodly are also dead, but their death ought not to obliterate the memory of God's judgments; but after their death these judgments ought to be known among men, and serve to teach them, in order that posterity may understand that they are not presumptuously to provoke God." This seems to be the real meaning of the Prophet.

By saying, *Your fathers where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* he makes a concession, as though he

[1] This notion was originated by the *Targum*. The second was adopted by *Cyril* and others, as well as by *Jerome;* but *Drusius, Grotius, Mede, Marckius, Newcome,* and *Henderson* agree with the view given by *Calvin*. —*Ed.*

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had said, "I allow that both your fathers and my Prophets are dead; but my words are they dead?" God, in a word, distinguishes between the character of his word and the condition of men, as though he had said, that the life of men is frail and limited to a few years, but that his truth never perishes. And rightly does he mention the ungodly as well as the Prophets; for we know that whenever God punishes the despisers of his word, he gives perpetual examples, which may keep men in all ages within the boundaries of duty. Hence, though many ages have passed away since God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, yet that example remains, and retains its use to this day; for the ruin of Sodom is a mirror in which we may see at this time that God is the perpetual judge of the world. Since then the ungodly have perished, the punishment with which God visited their sins ought not to be buried with them, but to be ever remembered by men. This is the reason why he says, "your fathers are dead: this you must admit; but as they had been severely chastised, ought ye not at this day to profit by such examples?" Then he says, "my Prophets also are dead; but it was my will that they should be the preachers of my truth, and for this end, that after their death posterity might know that I had once spoken through them." To the same purpose are the words of Peter, who says, that he laboured that the memory of what he taught might continue after he was removed from his tabernacle. "As then," he says, "the time of my dissolution is at hand, I endeavour as far as I can, that you may remember what I teach after my death." (2 Pet. i. 15.) We now perceive the object of the Prophet.

He then immediately adds, *But my words and my statutes*[1] *which I have committed to my Prophets, have they not laid hold on your fathers?* We have seen that he made a con-

[1] "Statuta mea," חקי; "decreta," *Dathius;* "decrees," *Henderson.* The word means what is defined or appointed, as an order or a course, or a portion. It signifies here the portion defined and allotted to the Jews, the judgments denounced on them, which had been executed. They were God's defined and allotted portions, what he had exactly described and defined by his Prophets. He says first, "my words," a general term, and then, to express more distinctly what was intended, he adds, "my decrees," or my appointments, or my allotted portions.—*Ed.*

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cession in the last verse; but here God expressly declares what I have stated—that though men vanish, or are hence removed after a short time, yet heavenly truth is ever firm, and retains its own power. But the Prophet uses another form of expression, *My words,* he says, *which I have committed to my servants, the Prophets, have they not laid on*[1] *your fathers?* that is, "ought the remembrance of the punishment, by which I intended to teach you, and your children, and your grandchildren, that ye might not provoke my wrath as your fathers did, to be lost by you? Since then ye see the effect of my doctrine in your fathers, why do ye not consider, that as I am always the same, my words cannot possibly be in vain at the present day, or be without effect?" We now then see how clearly the Prophet distinguishes between the word of God and the condition of men; for God does not declare what is empty, nor give utterance to words which produce no effect; but he executes whatever he has committed to his Prophets.

He then adds, *They returned and said,*[2] *As Jehovah of hosts had purposed to do to us on account of our ways and our works, so hath he done.* Added here is a confession, which ought to have perpetually stimulated the Jews, while they saw that the obstinacy of their fathers had been subdued by the scourges of God. It is indeed true, that though they had been sharply chastised, many of them did not yet really repent. God however extorted from them the confession that they were justly punished. Even the ungodly then had been constrained to give glory to God, and to confess that they were justly treated as guilty; but their children became immediately forgetful—was this a stupidity capable of being excused? He at the same time indirectly warns posterity

[1] "Overtake" is adopted by *Newcome* and *Henderson;* "supervenerunt —came upon," *Grotius.* God's judgments pursued and overtook them as a hunter his prey, or an enemy a flying enemy.—*Ed.*

[2] "Adeo ut reversi dixerint—so that when they returned they said," *Jun.* et *Trem.*, and *Piscator;* "so that they turned and said," *Henderson. Newcome* continues the question from the preceding line, "and did they *not* return and say?" The "return" here seems not to have been from a sinful course, but from exile. The confession was made by those who returned from Babylon. The sentence may be thus rendered, "when they returned, they said."—*Ed.*

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that they might not imitate the negligence of their fathers, who would not have repented had they not been severely chastised; but that they might, on the contrary anticipate the judgment of God. We then see why the Prophet mentions that the Jews, who had been severely treated, freely confessed that they had been chastised by the hand of God; but we must notice the words.

He says, that the fathers had *returned.* Though their repentance was not sincere, yet God intimates that such was their punishment that it drew from them the confession that is here mentioned. What then could their posterity mean? or how could they become so audaciously mad against God, when they saw that their fathers and their obstinacy had been, as it were, broken down by the severe strokes by which God had smitten them? He then subjoins, *and said, As Jehovah hath prepared to do,* &c. They confessed that they suffered evils not through chance, but that the purpose of God was thus fulfilled, which they had previously despised and almost derided. They further confessed, that they justly suffered; and they referred to their works and to their course of life. Since, then, the fathers had made this confession, who had hardened themselves long in their sins, their posterity were wholly without excuse in going on still to their own ruin, in continuing impenitent, though warned by examples so memorable. This is the import of the passage. It now follows—

7. Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which *is* the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

8. I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle-trees that *were* in the bottom; and behind him *were there* red horses, speckled, and white.

9. Then said I, O my lord, what *are* these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these *be.*

7. Die vicesima quarta undecimi mensis, hic est mensis Sebath, anno secundo Darii, fuit sermo Iehovæ ad Zachariam, filium Berechiæ, filii Addo (*vel,* Iddo,) Prophetæ, (*vel,* Prophetam; *sed melius quadrat accusativus,*) dicendo,

8. Vidi nocte, et ecce vir equitans super equum rufum, (*vel,* rubicundum,) et ipse stabat inter myrtos quæ erant in profundo: post eum equi rufi, (*vel,* rubicundi, *idem est nomen,*) varii, (*vel,* medii coloris,) et albi.

9. Et dixi, Qui isti, Domine mi? Et dixit mihi Angelus qui loquebatur mecum, Ego ostendam tibi quinam isti sint.

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10. And the man that stood among the myrtle-trees answered and said, These *are they* whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

11. And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle-trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

10. Et respondit vir qui stabat inter myrtos et dixit, Hi sunt quos misit Iehova ad perambulandum in terra.

11. Et responderunt Angelo Iehovæ qui stabat inter myrtos et dixerunt, Perambulavimus in terra, et ecce tota terra quiescit et tranquilla est.

Here is related a second prophecy, connected with a vision. At the beginning God alone spoke and gave commission to his Prophet to reprove the Jews: he now confirms the prediction as to the reduction of the city; for to the word is added a vision, which is, as we have seen elsewhere, a sort of seal. As the vision is obscure it may be variously explained, but I shall endeavour to accommodate it, without any refinements, to our use; and so no ambiguity will remain, provided we seek to be soberly and moderately wise, that is, provided we aim at no more than what edification requires.

The Prophet says, that a vision was given him; and he *saw* a horseman among the myrtles sitting on a red horse; and with him there were horses red, variegated,[1] and white, and having no doubt riders. So I understand the passage; for extremely gross is the idea that the horses spoke. There were then, as it were, a troop of horsemen; but the Prophet says, that one appeared as the chief leader, who was accompanied by others. In the meantime an angel stood at the side of the Prophet, who led him, and showed to him his concern for the holy city and the chosen people. He then adds, that these horsemen had returned from an expedition; for they had been sent to review the whole world and its different parts. He therefore says, that they had returned from their journey, and also that the whole earth was quiet, that

[1] "Varii"—שרקים; "ψαιοὶ—variegated, parti-coloured," *Sept.*; "dun," *Newcome*; "bay," *Henderson*; "gilvus-ash colour," *Bochart*; "brown," *Blayney*. It seems to have been a mixed colour, between red and white, to denote a mixed state of things.

"They had horses to show their power and celerity, and horses of different colours to intimate the difference of their ministries."—*Newcome*.

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men enjoyed peace and tranquillity everywhere. At length he adds, that the angel of God cried out, *How long, Jehovah, wilt thou not show mercy to Jerusalem?* For the angel, touched with grief on hearing that all the heathens were enjoying rest, expostulates with God; for it seemed a very unbecoming and strange thing that the faithful alone should be oppressed with adversities, while others lived in peace and enjoyed their pleasures. There follows at length an answer from God, as we shall presently see.

But let us now enquire the Prophet's design. I regard this as the object—that horsemen were presented to the Prophet, that he might know that God does not remain shut up in heaven and neglect the affairs of men; but that he has, as it were, swift horses, so that he knows what things are everywhere carried on. As then kings having horses at command, send their riders here and there, and bid them soon to return to them that they may know what to do; so the Prophet ascribes here to God the character of a chief sovereign, who enquires respecting all the affairs of men. It is indeed certain, that God receives no information from angels, for nothing is hid from him: nay, all things were fully known to him before he created angels. God, therefore, needs no such helps in order to know what is going on from the rising to the setting sun; but such a mode of speaking often occurs in Scripture; and it is a common thing, that God assumes the character of man in order that he may more familiarly instruct us. Let us then especially bear in mind, that the riders who appeared to the Prophet were angels, who are ever ready to serve God. And they were sent here and there, not that they might declare to God any thing unknown to him, but that we may believe that God cares for human affairs; and that though angels appear not to us they are always engaged, and survey the world, so that nothing is done without the knowledge and will of God. This is one thing.

The Prophet says also, that the vision was given him in the *night:* he refers no doubt to what actually took place, and also to the manner in which he was taught; for though the vision was not given in vain, yet God meant that it should

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not be plain, in order that he might give by little and little a glimpse of hope to the Jews. As then God did not intend to exhibit in full light what he afterwards in due time taught them, the vision appeared in the night. And to the same purpose is what he says respecting the angels, that they were in a *dark* or *deep place*, and that they were among the myrtles. For to consider what is here said allegorically seems to me frivolous. I will, therefore, not refinedly discuss here the nature of myrtles: but as we know that the trees are dark and afford a thick shade, God intended, I have no doubt, by the sight of them, to produce an effect on the Prophet's mind, so that he might understand that the prophecy was yet obscure, and that the time for a plain and clear revelation was not come. There were then horsemen among the myrtles, that is, under these dark and shady trees; and also in a deep place and in a thick shade. We see how aptly these things correspond. Some think that by their colours is designated the state of the people, being that of sorrow and of joy; for though quietness in part was restored to the people, yet much darkness remained and much perplexity in their affairs: but as this idea is probable, I do not reject it, provided we retain what I have stated, that the obscurity of the Prophecy is noted by the deep valley and the myrtles.

There was one more eminent than the rest, and in this there is nothing unusual; for when God sends forth a company of angels, he gives the lead to some one: and this is the reason why one is described here as more illustrious than all the others. If we regard this angel to be Christ, the idea is consistent with the common usage of Scripture; for Christ, we know, being the head of angels, ever exercises such dominion over them, that in obeying God they do nothing but under his authority. It may be then that one angel assumed here a pre-eminence over the rest, that the Prophet might think of the Redeemer, who exercises power over angels and the whole Church.

With regard to the different colours the Prophet no doubt understood that they designated the offices allotted to angels, as some convey God's benefits, and others come armed with

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scourges and swords. For what was the design of the vision in which some riders appeared on white horses, some on red, and some on bay, (or, on those of a mixed colour, which is more probable,) except that God intended to show that he sent angels, not only that they might survey the state of things, but that they might also come to chastise men, or to be ministers of his benefits? Besides, it was God's purpose, as I have already hinted, to make it known, that nothing is carried on in this world but what is known by angels, who are his emissaries and agents.

They said that *the whole earth was then quiet*,[1] that is, the countries bordering on Judea, or the oriental regions. Hence a greater confidence might be entertained by the Jews, for with the prayer of the angel is connected a complaint—"God of hosts, what is thy purpose?" that is, "Is it thy will that all others should enjoy quietness and peace, while enemies are continually hostile and troublesome to thy people? Is it right that thy Church should be ever miserably distressed, while heathens, who have no care for religion, should be so bountifully favoured by thee? Is it not better that the memory of thy name should be extinguished, and that all worship should fall to the ground, than that so unjust a reward should be returned to thy servants?" We now see the design of the vision, even that the Jews might be assured that the distresses which they endured would not be perpetual. How so? because God slept not in heaven, but had his runners; and further, since his will was that all nations should be tranquil, he would no doubt have at length a regard for his own people, so as to deliver them from their troubles.

Though then the vision is obscure, yet its design is not doubtful. Besides, if we are content with what is moderate, there will be found here nothing so perplexing but that we may easily learn at least the import of the Prophecy. But the curiosity of those interpreters has done much harm, who by examining every single syllable have advanced many

[1] The literal rendering is, "All the earth sits and rests." It is represented as a man sitting and quietly taking his rest. There was then peace throughout the Persian empire, which is set forth here as the whole earth.

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puerile things. There is therefore nothing better than to attend to the design of the Prophet, and then to regard the circumstances of the time, and thirdly, to follow the analogy between the signs and things signified.

I have said that angels are here introduced, because it would be difficult for us to ascend to the highest glory of God. God, we know, is not constrained by necessity to employ angels as ministers to execute his judgments, to punish men, or to confer benefits: for God himself is sufficient for all these things. Why then does he employ angels and make use of their ministration, if it be superfluous? The obvious answer is this—as we are prone to unbelief, we ever tremble in dangers, except we know that God is prepared with many forces to help us in time of need. When it is said in Psalm xxiv. that angels encamp around those who fear God, is it not a much more effectual relief than if it had been simply said that God is our citadel? It is indeed said in many places that God is an unassailable fortress; but as many still continue to doubt when they hear that there is a sufficient defence for them in God, he consults now their weakness, and adds, "I come with a great host; I am not alone your helper, but there is a great army ready at my bidding. Whenever then it may please me a troop of angels, yea, many myriads shall assemble together." When therefore God thus speaks, it is a mode of teaching suitable to the capacities of men. So now, when Zechariah sees many runners, who have been sent by God to perambulate and to survey the earth, it may with greater certainty be learnt that nothing is carried on without design or by chance in the world, but that all things come before God, and that the manner in which all things occur is set forth by the angels. In the same way is the representation given in the first chapter of Job: All the sons of God, that is, angels, came before his throne; and also among them Satan came; for though he does not willingly obey God, yet while he perambulates the earth, he at the same time executes God's judgments, though unwillingly. We now then see the reason why God did not himself appear, and testified to the Prophet, that whatever took place among the nations was

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known to him; but he shows that his runners rode swiftly through the whole earth, and returned afterwards to the heavenly tribunal, and proved that they had carefully performed their office.

Now the Prophet says, that he had this vision in the *eleventh month, called Sebat,*[1] *and on the twenty-fourth day* of the month; that is, in the third month after his first Prophecy. He had in the eighth month sharply reproved the Jews: now a consolation is added, lest they should despair, but know that they were still the objects of God's care. And possibly the reproof referred to had been effectual; nay, it is probable, that the Prophet did not labour in vain in exhorting the Jews to true and sincere repentance. When therefore they had given some evidence of religion, we see that God afterwards treated them more kindly, and set before them the hope of a future deliverance.

With regard to the night time, it is of importance to observe, that though God does not always set forth with full clearness his predictions, they are not yet without instruction, provided we be attentive, and provided also we suffer ourselves, while in darkness, to be ruled by the spirit of knowledge. By whatever different means then God may teach his faithful people, he always teaches them something useful, provided they murmur not when any thing is for a time obscure, but wait for the day of full revelation. And this is the design of Paul's admonition, "If ye think otherwise, this also will God reveal to you." Let us then know that God's manner of teaching is not always the same, but that his teaching is always profitable, provided the faithful retain due moderation and sobriety, and suffer themselves to be guided step by step by God. This observation is to be applied to the whole verse, when it is said, that the horses and the horsemen stood under the myrtles, and also in a low place.

And, then, as to the various colours of the horses, it ought not to be deemed strange, that God should thus allot different offices to angels; for he does not always punish us by the ministry of Satan. He has celestial angels, when it

[1] "This month corresponded with the latter end of January and beginning of February."—*Blayney.*

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pleases him, as executioners of his vengeance; and he sometimes employs devils for this purpose. However this may be, it is in his power to delegate angels as ministers of his kindness, or to send them to execute his vengeance, so that they appear in red colour, or in some other. In conclusion, it ought also to be borne in mind, that angels do stand before the tribunal of God, after having diligently perambulated the earth, not after the manner of men: for it would be gross and puerile to imagine angels sitting on horses, inasmuch as they are spirits who are confined to no certain place; but as we cannot understand, according to our capacities, the celestial mysteries of God, it is necessary that such representations should be set before our eyes. However this may be, it ought to remain a fixed principle, that angels are always employed, for they survey the earth, that nothing may be done or carried on without design; and they are also sent with power and authority, so that they are, as it were, the hand of God: and at one time they execute his judgments, inflict punishments, as it has been said; and at another they come with blessings from God. This then is the meaning as to the horsemen. I cannot proceed farther: the rest I shall defer.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we live here as in thick darkness, and are also surrounded with so much darkness of ignorance, that we often entertain doubts as to thy providence, and think ourselves forsaken by thee whenever thou dost not immediately succour us,—O grant, that with our minds raised above, we may contemplate those things which thou hast once revealed to thy servant Zechariah, and not doubt, but thou lookest on us also and commandest thy angels to take care of us, and to raise us up in their hands, and to guide us in all our ways, yea, in all the crooked windings of this life, so that we may learn to commit ourselves to be wholly ruled by thee, and thus suffer ourselves to be drawn and turned here and there in the world, so as still to follow the way which thou hast pointed out to us, and to proceed straight towards the mark which thou hast been pleased to set before us, until we shall at length be gathered into that eternal rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-sixth.

12. Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

12. Et respondit Angelus Iehovæ et dixit, Iehova exercituum, quousque tu non misereberis Ierusalem et urbium Iehudah, quas sprevisti (*vel*, detestatus es; *alii vertunt*, quibus iratus fuisti; בִּ *utrumque significat; sed videtur melius quadrare prior ille sensus*, quas *ergo* sprevisti) his septuaginta annis?

The Prophet now shows that the angel who was his guide and teacher, became even a suppliant before God in behalf of the welfare of the Church. Hence the probable opinion is, that this angel was Christ the Mediator. For they who say that it was the Holy Spirit, who forms prayers in our hearts, seem to depart very far from the meaning of the Prophet: and it is nothing new, that Christ should exercise care over his Church. But if this view be disapproved, we may take any one of the angels to be meant. It is certain that it is enjoined them all to minister to the salvation of the faithful, according to what the Apostle says in the first chapter of the Hebrews; and indeed the whole Scripture is full of evidences, which prove that angels are guardians to the godly, and watch over them; for the Lord, for whose service they are ever ready, thus employs them: and in this we also see the singular love of God towards us; for he employs his angels especially for this purpose, that he might show that our salvation is greatly valued by him.

There is then nothing wrong, if we say that any one of the angels prayed for the Church. But absurdly, and very foolishly do the Papists hence conclude, that dead saints are our advocates before God, or that they pray for us; for we never read that it is an office committed to the dead to intercede for us; nay, the duties of love, we know, are confined to the present life. When, therefore, the faithful remove from this world, having finished their course, they enter on a blessed life. Though then the case is different, yet the Papists foolishly pass from angels to the dead: for

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as it has been stated, the case of the faithful has been committed to angels, and they ever watch over the whole body, and over every member of it. It is then nothing strange that they offer prayers for the faithful; but it does not hence follow, that angels are to be invoked by us. Why does Scripture testify, that angels supplicate God for us? Is it that each of us may flee to them? By no means; but that being assured of God's paternal love, we may entertain more hope and confidence; yea, that we may courageously fight, being certain of victory, since celestial hosts contend for us, according to what appears from many examples. For when the servant of Elisha saw not the chariots flying in the air, he became almost lost in despair; but his despair was instantly removed, when he saw so many angels ready at hand for help, (2 Kings vi. 17;) so whenever God declares that angels are ministers for our safety, he means to animate our faith; at the same time he does not send us to angels; but this one thing is sufficient for us, that when God is propitious to us, all the angels have a care for our salvation. And we must further notice what is said by Christ, "hereafter ye shall see angels ascending and descending," (John i. 51,) which means, that when we are joined to the head, there will thence proceed a sacred union between us and angels; for Christ, we know, is equally Lord over all. When, therefore, we are united to the body of Christ, it is certain that angels are united to us, but only through Christ. All this favour then depends on the one true Mediator. Far then is it from being the case, that Scripture represents angels as patrons to whom we may pray. The meaning then is what we have stated, when Zechariah says, that the angel thus prayed, *O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah?*

The angel seems in this place to have indirectly blamed God for having too much delayed to bring help to his Church: but this mode of speaking, we know, frequently occurs in the prayers of the saints; they in a manner charged God with delay, that is, according to the perception of their flesh. But this is not inconsistent with the obedi-

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ence of faith, since the faithful submit at length to the counsel of God. Hence, however familiarly they may often expostulate with God, when he seems to delay and to withhold his aid, they yet restrain themselves, and at length feel assured that what God has appointed is best. But they thus pour forth their cares and their sorrows into the bosom of God, in order to disburden themselves. The angel now adopts this form when he says, "How long wilt thou not show mercy?" It is not however the complaint of unreasonable fervour, as that of the ungodly, who in praying accuse God, rage against him, and quarrel with his judgments. The angel then was not moved by any turbulent feeling, nor were the saints, when they adopted this mode of praying; but they did what God allows us all to do; they thus disburdened their cares and sorrows.

We ought at the same time to notice the special import of the words, "how long," עַד־מָתַי, *od-mati?* The angel indeed afterwards explains himself, when he expressly mentions the term of seventy years.[1] It was not then without design, or through a strong impulse of feeling, that the angel said, How long? but he had regard to a memorable prophecy, which was in the mouth of all the godly; for God had fixed seventy years for the exile of the people. Since the people knew that a time had been predetermined by God, he does not here supplicate God according to his own will, but only alleges the promise itself: and it is an usual thing with the saints to plead before God what he has promised to them. What indeed can better sustain our hope? and what can give us a greater encouragement in praying, than when we plead with God according to his promises? For God will have our prayers to be founded first on his gratuitous goodness, and then on the constancy of his faithfulness and truth. When therefore they thus address God, "O Lord, thou art true, and thou hast promised this to us; relying on thy word, we dare ask what otherwise we could not,"—they certainly do not exceed the limits as

[1] The Hebrew literally is, "this seventies year." A similar anomaly is found in Welsh, "this ten year and sixty," or "this sixty year and ten."—*Ed.*

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though they prescribed to God a law, but anxiously seek to obtain what had been freely offered. We have seen that the angel does not here complain of delay, but that he founded his plea on that remarkable prophecy, in which God had fixed the term of seventy years for his people.

They who lay hold on this place for the purpose of showing that the people had returned before the time, rely on a very frivolous refinement: for the angel does not say that the time of exile was completed on the very day in which he made this prayer; but as it had already elapsed, yea and many years had passed by since the people had begun to return, and yet the favour which the faithful expected had not appeared, the angel complains, that though the seventy years had elapsed, yet a restoration, such as had been promised, had not taken place. But that the people had not returned before the time fixed for their exile, we have already proved by many and strong reasons. And they pervert things who obscure the favour of God in the restoration of his people; for they do not make it that redemption of which the Prophets had spoken so much. They therefore rob God of this high honour. Besides, the Scriptures in many places testify that Darius and Cyrus were moved in this case by the impulse of God and by the secret guidance of his Spirit. It hence follows that this redemption was the work of God. And God knew, as it is well known to all the godly, how to regulate all events as to time. We hence then learn, how foolish and unreasonable are those interpreters who pervert the saying of the angel; for his complaint would have been unjust, had not the time previously elapsed. As then God had deferred his favours, at least had not made it known as it had been desired, the angel mentions the seventy years.[1]

[1] This point has been frequently referred to by *Calvin:* but mistakes have arisen from not considering that no less than *three* events are coincident with this number, as it is clearly proved by *Petavius, Prideaux, Bishop Newton,* and others. From the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. i. 1; Jer. xxv. 1-11, to the edict of Cyrus, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, there were seventy years; the same time transpired from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Jer. lii. 13, eighteen years after, to the second year of Darius Hystaspes, when a decree was made to rebuild the temple;

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I have said, that it is more suitable to the passage to say, that the cities had been despised by God: but if any prefers the other view, I will not contend; yet whosoever will minutely consider the intention of the Prophet, will, I think, readily assent to the idea, that the cities had been despised or rejected by God, because he gave them no sign of his mercy.[1] It now follows—

13. And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me *with* good words, *and* comfortable words.

13. Et respondit Iehova angelo mecum loquenti verba bona (*vel*, dulcia) verba consolatoria.

The Prophet shows here, that though God did not immediately on the first day stretch forth his hand to the miserable Jews, he was yet propitious to them. But we must notice, that God speaks only, and does not yet manifest his power. The Prophet's design must be here observed; for first he reminds the faithful that there was no reason for them to despair, or to be cast down with sorrow; for celestial angels prayed to God for them, and pleaded for their salvation. This is one thing. But a greater and fuller confirmation is added; for God testifies that he is ready to deliver the Jews, though he does not declare this immediately at first. And here we may remark, that it ought to be sufficient to sustain our hope and patience, when God testifies and affirms that he favours us, and that our salvation is dear to him, however miserable our condition may apparently be. God might indeed have immediately given a real proof to the Jews that the time had come to restore

and there were seventy years from the last captivity by Nebuzar-adan, Jer. lii. 30, to the time when the temple was finished. "So that taking it," says *Prideaux*, "which way you will, and at what stage you please, the prophecy of Jeremiah will be fully and exactly accomplished concerning this matter." Probably the second period is what is here intended.—*Ed.*

[1] The contrast seems to show that displeasure, or wrath, or flaming wrath, which זַעַם most strictly means, is intended rather than contempt; for רחם, pity or compassion, is what is prayed for. God had been as it were angry or indignant, but now his pity is solicited. He is asked to show pity to a people to whom he had manifested extreme displeasure. "Compassionate" and "angry" are the two words used by *Henderson*; and "have mercy" and "had indignation," by *Newcome*. The former appears to be the most appropriate rendering. Compassion or pity, and anger or wrath, seem to be the contrasts.—*Ed.*

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them to full prosperity: this he did not, but only made a promise. He gave words only: but his purpose was, by an actual trial, to prove the patience and obedience of his people, when he said that he had not forgotten his covenant, on which depended all the promises previously made.

But the Prophet seems to allude to a prophecy of Isaiah in the fortieth chapter, "Comfort ye my people, saith your God." The Prophets had been for a long time silent: it was indeed right that the Jews should remain long struggling, as they had for so many years hardened themselves against all threatenings, and even despised all God's judgments, according to what is said by Isaiah, "Let us eat and drink, to-morrow we shall die." (Is. xxii. 13.) As then the obstinacy of the people had been so great, it was proper that they should long mourn without comfort. But Isaiah says, that the time would come when God would command his servants to comfort his people again as in former times. Zechariah says now, that God spoke *consoling words.* We hence learn, that the desires of the godly and the prayer of the angel had been heard; for redemption was now nigh at hand, according to what is said in the hundred and second Psalm, "It is time for thee, O God, to have mercy on Sion, for its time is come;" that is, "The seventy years are completed, which it has pleased thee to assign for our exile." It now follows—

14. So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

14. Et dixit angelus qui loquebatur mecum, Clama dicendo, sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Zelatus sum Ierusalem et Sion zelo magno.

Zechariah now mentions the chief consolation to which he had referred; for it would not have been sufficient to say in general, and in a few words without explanation, that God gave a kind answer to the angel. For we know how strong were those temptations with which the faithful had to struggle. It was then needful for them to be furnished, not with light weapons, in so arduous a contest. This is the reason why Zechariah more fully expressed the words by which God then strengthened the faith of his people.

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He says that the angel had spoken; and he thus intimates that the consolation was not given privately to the angel, that he might keep it in his own bosom, but convey it to the whole people. This was not then a secret consolation, but what the Lord intended to be proclaimed by his Prophets, according to what is said by Isaiah in the passage to which we have already referred, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."

What God says, that he was *moved with great zeal for Jerusalem and Sion*,[1] is according to the common language of Scripture. For as God cannot otherwise sufficiently express the ineffable favour which he has towards his elect, he is pleased to adopt this similitude, that he undertakes the defence of his people, according to what is done by a husband who fights with the greatest zeal for his own wife. This is the reason why he says that he was zealous for Jerusalem. And we ought especially to notice this mode of speaking, that we may not think that God is indifferent when he delays and defers his aid: for as we are hasty in our wishes, so we would have God to be precipitant in the same manner; and we impute to him indifference, when he does not hasten according to our desires. These doubts God checks when he testifies that he is zealous: for he intimates that his slowness did not proceed from neglect, or because he despised or disregarded them; but that there was another reason why he held them in suspense. We may therefore be fully persuaded, that even when God withholds his aid, he is not otherwise affected towards us than the best of fathers towards his own children; and further, that the signs of his love do not appear because it is not always expedient for us

[1] *Marckius* and *Henderson* have followed this rendering of *Calvin*, and on the ground of a distinction between ל and ב following the verb here used; but there is no sufficient reason for this. It means to be jealous when followed by ל as well as by ב, see 1 Kings xix. 10, 14; Ps. cvi. 16. Our version, followed by *Blayney* and *Newcome*, is to be preferred here. There are two kinds of jealousy, as observed by *Blayney*: the one for disloyalty, and on account of alienated affection; such as is felt by a husband towards an unfaithful wife, Prov. vi. 34; and another for the honour and welfare of those whom we love when they are oppressed and wronged, Joel ii. 18. God might have been said to be jealous for Jerusalem on either of these accounts.—*Ed.*

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to be delivered soon from our troubles. Let this then be our shield against all hasty desires, so that we may not indulge our too ardent wishes, or think that our salvation is neglected by God, when he hides himself for a time and does not immediately stretch forth his hand to help us. It follows—

15. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are* at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

15. Et ira magna ego irascor contra gentes has quietas; quia ego iratus fui parum, et adjuverunt in malum.

God here obviates the doubt which might have easily crept into the minds of the godly. "Why should he then give up the miserable Jews to the will of the Gentiles, and suffer these heathens at the same time to be in a quiet state and to enjoy their pleasures?" This indeed at the first view seemed very strange: if God had such a zeal towards Jerusalem, why did he not give some token at least of his favour? He therefore gives this answer,—That though the condition of the Gentiles was now better, there was yet no reason for the Jews to be discontented in their troubles, because they were to look forward to the end that was to come. It must further be noticed, that God *speaks* only here, and is not going forth prepared to execute his vengeance: and it is a real and just trial of faith, when God bids us to depend on his word.

The manner of speaking used here deserves notice, God was *angry with the quiet nations*. It is not a superfluous repetition, when it is said, that the nations were quiet. Some render the word wealthy, but not so suitably; for as we have said before, the angel complained that while the whole world was tranquil, God severely chastised his Church alone. God then does here anticipate a temptation which would have otherwise distressed and even wholly disheartened the faithful; and he in effect says, "It is indeed true that the Gentiles all around are quiet, that there are no calamities, that there is no enemy, and that they are subject to no evils: this is no doubt true; but as I am angry, their happiness, while I am opposed to and displeased with them, is

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a curse." God, then, does here elevate the thoughts of the godly, that they might know that happiness is to be found in his favour alone, and that whenever he is angry or displeased, though men may think themselves happy, and flatter themselves and exult in their condition, they are yet in a most miserable state; for all happiness is ruinous which does not flow from the fountain of God's gratuitous love; in short, when God is not our Father, the more we abound in all kinds of blessings, the deeper we sink in all kinds of miseries. This then is the meaning, when God says that he was angry with the quiet nations.

What, then, is the application of this doctrine? That it behoved the Jews, though their condition was very hard according to the perception of men, to have yet acquiesced in the love of God, for they knew that he was their Father, and also, that though they saw their enemies happy, they were yet to regard it no otherwise than a cursed happiness. So also in the thirty-seventh Psalm, the faithful are bid not to envy the unbelieving, while they saw them flourishing in wealth and rolling in pleasures; for it behoved them to regard their end. Let us hence learn to raise up our thoughts to the contemplation of God's hidden love, when he deals severely with us, and to be satisfied with his word, as we have there an indubitable evidence of his favour: nor let us envy our enemies and the wicked, however the whole world may applaud them, and they themselves luxuriate in their blessings, for we know that God is adverse to them.

A reason also follows, *Because God was a little angry, and they helped forward the evil;* that is, they exceeded moderation. The meaning is, that the reward of cruelty would be repaid to all the enemies of the Church, because they had exercised immoderate severity, when it was God's purpose to chastise his children in a gentle and paternal manner.

It may be here first asked, How is it that God declares that he had been a little angry with his people, since his judgment, as pronounced by his servants, was most severe? "Whosoever shall escape the famine, shall fall by the sword; whosoever shall escape the sword, shall fall among wild

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beasts." (Ezek. xiv. 14.) And in many other places he declares the same, that there would be no hope of pardon to the people, but that they were all to perish; that is, the whole body: "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job," he says, "were in this city, they shall deliver only their lives; but I will not hear their prayers for this irreclaimable people." But the particle *little*, מְעַט, *mot*, must be applied to the elect: for though God in his dreadful vengeance consumed almost the whole people, yet a remnant, as we know, was preserved. This is the reason why God says, that he was but little angry with his people; for he speaks not of the reprobate and of that impure mass from which he purposed to cleanse his own house; but he hath respect to his covenant. We now perceive for what purpose Zechariah says, that God was but moderately angry with his people.

But another difficulty meets us—In what sense did the nations help on the evil? For it hence follows, that the heathens were not restrained from raging immoderately and at their pleasure. And this place has been also laid hold of by that miscreant, who has been lately writing against God's providence, holding that the wicked become wanton by means of God's hand and power, and are not thereby restrained. But this is extremely foolish; for the Prophet here does not regard what the nations were able to do or had done; but, on the contrary, he speaks of their cruelty, that they thought that there ought to have been no end until the memory of that people had been obliterated. And this is the reason why Isaiah says, "Thou hast not seen her end." He therefore upbraids the unbelieving, that they did not calculate rightly as to the end of the Church; for the unbelieving furiously attempted to destroy it, as though that promise could be made void, "My mercy I will not take away." Since the unbelieving did not see her end, because it was the Lord's will ever to preserve some remnant among his chosen people, the Prophet says, that they *helped forward the evil*. We now then perceive the intention of the Prophet, and see that the object is no other but to sustain the hope of the faithful, until what they heard from the mouth of God really took place. Let us proceed—

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16. Therefore thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

16. Propterea sic dicit Iehovah, Reversus sum ad Ierusalem in miserationibus; domus mea ædificabitur in ea, dicit Iehovah exercituum; et linea extendetur super Ierusalem.

This is a confirmation of the last prophecy,—that God purposed to put an end to his chastisement, as it is said by Isaiah, "They have received at Jehovah's hand double for all their sins." For in these words God reminds us that he was satisfied with the punishment he had inflicted on his people, like a father, who thinks that he had been sufficiently severe and rigid in punishing his son. So now, *Thus saith Jehovah, I have returned to Jerusalem in mercies:* for it was necessary to give the people the hope of pardon and reconciliation, that they might look forward with confidence. Hypocrites very quickly raise up their crests as soon as a kind word is addressed to them; but the faithful, being conscious of what is wrong, and having their sins before their eyes, do not so easily take courage; nor can they do so, until they are convinced that their sins are buried, and that they themselves are freed from guilt. Hence the Prophet says, that God had *turned to Jerusalem*, that the Jews might know that the punishment with which God had visited them was to be only for a time.

But in the meantime he exhorts them to humility: for the people could not from this prophecy entertain any hope, except they duly considered that they had suffered justly, because they had provoked God's wrath. Hence the Prophet reminds them that what they had hitherto endured was to be imputed to their sins; but that God yet intended to treat them in a paternal manner; for, as I have already stated, he had promised that his mercy towards his elect and faithful would be perpetual. Hence he says, that he had *returned in mercies to Jerusalem.*

He then adds, *My house shall be built in it; and over Jerusalem shall a line be stretched forth.* Line, קָוֶה, *kue*, is to be taken for a perpendicular line, as in Is. xxviii. 17, and in other places. There is here an addition of ה, *he;* for as it has been elsewhere said, the language had become somewhat

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degenerated. The import of the whole is, that there was a hope of the temple and of the city being built, because God had returned into favour with the people. There are then two things to be noticed,—that God was now pacified towards Jerusalem,—and that the fruit of reconciliation would be the building of the temple, the establishment of divine worship and of the dignity of the kingdom. The Prophet teaches us at the same time, that the building of the temple was not to be expected but as an instance of God's gratuitous favour, so that the Jews might know that every hope would have been cut off, had not God been pleased to abolish their guilt.

This doctrine ought also to be extended to the state of the Church at all times: for whence comes it that the Church remains safe in the world? Nay, how is it that it sometimes increases, except that God indulges us according to his infinite goodness? For we cease not daily to provoke him, and deserve to be wholly exterminated from the world. There would then be no Church, were not God to preserve it in a wonderful manner through his goodness and mercies, and also to restore it when it seems to have wholly fallen. He at length adds—

17. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

17. Adhuc clama, dicendo, Sic Iehova exercituum, Adhuc conterentur (*alii vertunt*, dispergentur, *vel*, se diffundent, *vel*, segregabuntur; *sed dicemus de proprio sensu*, conterentur *ergo*) urbes præ bono; et consolabitur Iehova adhuc Sion, et eliget adhuc Ierusalem.

I cannot finish to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that though we are continually tossed here and there by various trials, and Satan ceases not to shake our faith, —O grant, that we may yet stand firm on the promise that thou hast once given us, and which thou hast also confirmed through thine only-begotten Son, even that thou wilt ever be propitious and reconcilable to us, so that we may not despair in our greatest troubles, but relying on thy goodness may utter our groans to thee, until the ripened time of our deliverance shall come: nor

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let us in the meantime envy the evanescent happiness of thy enemies; but patiently wait, while thou showest that the chief object of desire is to have thee propitious to us, and that accursed is every good thing which the ungodly receive while they provoke thee and make thee angry, until Christ shall at length reveal to us the real happiness and glory of thy Church, when he shall appear at the last day for our salvation.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-seventh.

I WAS not able in my last lecture fully to explain the verse in which the Prophet says that he was commanded by the angel to cry again, that God had returned to Jerusalem in mercies. The design of the words is this,—that though it was difficult to believe the restoration of Jerusalem, it was yet to be fully expected, for the Lord had so appointed. But he enlarges on what I have before stated; for the blessing of God is extended to the cities of Judah, though an express mention is made only of Jerusalem. *Yet cities,* he says, *shall wear out through abundance of blessings;* for so I think the verb תְּפוֹצֶנָה, *tephutzne*, is to be taken, as פוּץ means to spread, and also to wear out, and to break. Some elicit a forced meaning, that cities would spread themselves; others, that they would be separated, that is, that security would be so great, that cities, though distant from one another, would be in no danger or fear. But the meaning of the Prophet is clear, unless we designedly pervert it in a matter so manifest and easy. The cities, he says, shall be worn out or wearied through abundance of blessings, or as we say, *elles seront entassées;* for where there is a great heap, there is crushing. He therefore says, that so great and so full would be the abundance of all things, that the corn would press down itself, and that the vessels would hardly contain the vintage. We now perceive what the Prophet means,—that Jerusalem would yet be made complete, and also that other cities would be filled with all good things, because God would extend his favour to the whole people.[1]

[1] The verb here used is rendered, "shall be filled," by the *Targum;*

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He then adds, *Comfort Zion will yet Jehovah, and he will yet choose Jerusalem.* The particle עוד, *oud*, yet, is repeated; for the suspension of favour, of which we have before spoken, might have somewhat prevented the faithful from realizing the promise. As then God's favour was for a time hid, the angel declares, that such would be the change, that God's goodness and love towards his chosen people would again shine forth as in former days.

As to the word "chosen," it must be observed, that it is applied, not in its strict sense, to the effect or the evidence of election; for God had chosen before the creation of the world whom he had designed to be his own. But he is said to choose whom he receives into favour, because their adoption seems obliterated in the eyes of men, when there appears no evidence of his paternal favour. As for instance, whenever we read that God had repudiated his own people, it is certain, as Paul says, that the calling of God is without repentance, (Rom. xi. 29:) nor does he declare this only of the secret election of each, but also of that general election, by which God had set apart the race of Abraham from the rest of the nations. At the same time many of Abraham's children were reprobates, as he instances in the case of Esau and of others: yet the election of God was unchangeable; and hence it was that there remained still some hope as to that people, that God would at length gather to himself a Church from the Jews as well as from the Gentiles, so that those who were then separated might be hereafter united together. Since then the calling of God is without repentance, *αμεταμελητος*, how is it that the Lord is often said to choose, and is also said to reject his chosen? These expressions refer to

"shall abound," by *Jerome*; "διαχυθησονται—shall be spread out," by the *Septuagint*; "shall spread themselves," by *Grotius*; "shall be spread abroad," by *Newcome*; "shall overflow," by *Henderson*. There are here two ideas; one derived from the Targum, and the other from the Septuagint. The original verb means properly to burst out, to dilate, to spread; and the line may be rendered,

Burst out again shall my cities through abundance.

The reference seems to be to their enlargement, and not to their multiplicity, as *Newcome* thinks, and that through abundance of blessings, literally, "through good," מטוב, or good things, the poetical singular instead of the plural.—*Ed.*

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the outward appearance of things. God therefore will secure his own election to the end; but as we cannot otherwise perceive but that we are rejected by God when he turns away his face from us, he is said to choose again those whom he has repudiated, that is, when he really and by a clear evidence proves that he has not forgotten their first adoption, but that he continues unchangeable in his purpose.

We now then understand what the Prophet means. I have more fully dwelt on this point, because it is necessary to understand this great truth,—that whatever blessings God confers on his own people proceed from eternal election, that this is a perpetual fountain, and yet that election is catachrestically[1] applied to its evidences or effects, as also rejection is to be taken in the same sense for outward punishment, which seems at the first view to be an evidence of rejection, though it be not really so. Let us now proceed—

18. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

19. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

20. And the Lord showed me four carpenters.

21. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

18. Et sustuli oculos meos, et vidi, et ecce quatuor cornua.

19. Et dixi ad angelum, qui loquebatur mecum, Qui isti? (*hoc est*, Qui sunt isti?) et dixit ad me, Hæc sunt cornua quæ ventilarunt Iehudah, Israel, et Ierusalem. (*Ego conjungam etiam proximos versus.*)

20. Et ostendit mihi Iehova quatuor fabros.

21. Et dixi, Cur isti? quid isti veniunt ad faciendum? (*ad verbum, hoc est*, Quorsum isti veniunt ut faciant?) et dixit dicendo, Hæc sunt cornua quæ ventilarunt Iehudah, ita ut nemo tolleret caput suum: et veniunt isti (fabri *scilicet*) ad terrendum (*addo*, cornua, *quoniam relativum* אוֹתָם *obscurum per se esset*,) ut projiciant cornua gentium, quæ sustulerunt cornu contra terram Iehudah, ut ventilarent eam.

Now follows another vision, by which God confirms what he had before testified to his Prophet. He then says, that

[1] Καταχρηστικως, forcedly, contrary to usage or what is strictly correct. —*Ed.*

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though enemies should on every side rise up against the Church and cause it many troubles, there was yet a remedy in God's hand, as he would break in pieces all horns by his hammers. He compares the Gentiles, who had been hostile to the Jews, to horns; and he afterwards compares to workmen the other enemies, whose hand and labour God would use for the purpose of breaking down the efforts of all those who would be troublesome to the Church. The import of the whole then is,—that though the Church would not be exempt and free from troubles, and those many, yet God would have in his hand those remedies by which he would check all the assaults of the wicked, however impetuously and violently they may rage against his miserable Church.

But let us see in the first place why the Prophet mentions *four horns*. The Jews refer to the Assyrians and the Babylonians, to the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans; because we find in other places, and Daniel especially shows very clearly, (Dan. ii. 32,) that there were to be four principal monarchies, by which God intended to give clear and memorable examples of his judgments. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, speaks here of the Moabites and of the Syrians, and of other nations, as well as of the Assyrians or Chaldees. They are then mistaken, as I think, who suppose that these four monarchies are intended here:[1] but Zechariah says that they were four horns, because they arose from the four quarters of the world; for we know that the Jews were not harassed only on one side, but on the east and the west, on the north and the south. Since then enemies on every side joined their strength and their forces against the Jews, so that there was a cause for trembling from the four quarters of the world, that is, from all places around them, the Prophet says, that they had been *scattered by four horns*.

[1] Some of the Rabbins, *Jerome*, *Vatablus*, and latterly *Blayney*, have adopted this view; but it is wholly inadmissible. The single reason that the *past* enemies of the Jews are here referred to, is a sufficient refutation. The number *four* is differently accounted for by *Cyril* and some others. It is explained of the four principal enemies of the Jews—Pul, Shalmenezar, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar. But what *Calvin* says seems most satisfactory. "Why four? to denote that these kingdoms had many enemies, enemies on every side, Ezra iv. 1; Neh. iv. 7."—*Newcome*. With this view *Theodoret*, *Marckius*, and *Henderson* also agree.—*Ed*.

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This view, however, seems still frigid, because it was not necessary for the Prophet to state what was well known to all: but God intended to show that the nations which had been inimical and hostile to the Jews, had done nothing but through his hidden impulse, in order that the Jews might understand that these were so many scourges by which he purposed to chastise them.

But we must join the latter part,—that God showed also to the Prophet *four smiths,* for these two visions are connected together. Whosoever then takes only the first part, acts very absurdly, for the meaning of the prophecy will not be thus evident. If then we would not mutilate what is connected, we must not separate what is added respecting the four smiths. Inasmuch then as the Jews had been on every side oppressed, God shows that he has remedies enough, and even from various quarters. The Prophet had seen four horns; he now sees four smiths, that is, he is made to know that God can immediately find means to check all disorders and tumults; for he can beat as it were on an anvil these horns, and break in pieces those which had previously scattered the Jews. The same view then is to be taken of the number *four* as in the former instance: for as the Chaldeans had raged against the Jews, so the Lord shews that he had enemies ready at hand, as he had already in part made it evident; for how was it that the Persians and Medes had so suddenly taken possession of Babylon, had they not been workmen whom God had employed to strike down the Babylonian horn? And whence was it that the Syrians, the Egyptians, and other nations had been made prostrate? It was because they were horns. But the Lord broke down the ferocity of so many nations by his many workmen, for he employed these as though they were hired and ready to do his service. We now apprehend the real object of the Prophet.

But though the Prophet intended by this prophecy to encourage and animate to patience his own nation, as the Spirit of God had given him this office; yet there is here set before us by the Lord as in a mirror, the real condition of the Church at this day. Let us not then wonder if the

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world rage on every side against the Church, and if storms and tempests arise from the east as well as from the west: nor is it a new thing that many enemies from various parts unite together; and that God's Church should thus have to bear many assaults. This is one thing. In the meantime let this be our consolation,—that God has many smiths at hand. Very apposite is the Prophet's metaphor; for the hardness of the horns was formidable to the Jews; but the Prophet intimates that there is hardness in the hammers, capable of breaking in pieces all horns. God then, though we may be struck by our enemies, will find smiths to break them in pieces; and this indeed is what we have found by experience. How comes it, that the small number of those who purely worship God continue to exist, notwithstanding the rage of enemies, and in spite of so many consultations and devices? For what do all monarchies desire more, or with greater avidity, than to extinguish the memory of the gospel? If then we enquire, what is the condition of the whole world at this day, we shall find that there is hardly a city or a people, or a monarch, or even one of the least princes, whose rage is not exhibited against the Church. How then comes it, that they do not put forth their strength and demolish the Church, which by one breath might a hundred times fall to the ground? How is this, except that God by his hammers breaks the horns, and that by means of smiths?

And who are these smiths? They are also horns; for they all wish to destroy as much as they can the Church; but God does not permit them; on the contrary he excites them to mutual wars to destroy one another. Though then all these are horns, ready to assault the Church, and though it appears evident from the comparison that they are as it were furious and vicious bulls, and as much as they can unite together to scatter the Church, yet God gives hammers to two or three of them, and bids them to check the ferocity of their associates. While all these are intent on striking and dispersing the Church by their horns, the Lord calls them to a different work, and as I have said, bids them to be smiths that they may strike and break in pieces these

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horns, even their associates, with whom they had previously wickedly conspired. And it is certainly a wonderful instance of God's providence, that amidst so violent and turbulent commotions the Church should take breath, though under the cross; for except these hammers had broken the horns, we must have been pierced through, not only a hundred but a thousand times, and had been dashed into fragments. But God has turned aside their strokes and assaults by his hammers, and, as I have said, has employed his enemies for this purpose.

We now then see that this prophecy was not only useful in the age of Zechariah, but that it has been so in all ages, and that it ought not to be confined to the ancient people, but extended to the whole body of the Church.

But the Prophet, by saying that he asked the angel, sets before us an example of a truly teachable disposition. Though the Lord then may not immediately explain to us his messages, there is yet no reason for us in disdain to reject what is obscure, as we see to be done by many in our day; for when any thing seems ambiguous to them, they immediately reject it, and also complain that God's word is extremely difficult; and such blasphemies are uttered by many at this day. But the Prophet, though perplexed, did not yet morosely reject what God had showed; on the contrary, he asked the angels. Though the angels are not nigh us, or at least do not appear to us in a visible form, yet God can by other means afford us help when there is any perplexity in his word: he promises to give us the spirit of understanding and wisdom, whenever there is need; and we also know that the preaching of the word and the sacraments are helps to lead us to himself. If then we neglect not these helps which God affords us, and especially if we ask him to guide us by his Spirit, there will certainly be nothing obscure or intricate in the prophecies, which he will not, as far as it is necessary, make known to us. He does not indeed give the Spirit in an equal degree to all; but we ought to feel assured, that though prophecies may be obscure, there will yet be a sure profit derived, if we be teachable and submissive to God; for we find that Zechariah was

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not deprived of his request, as the angel gave him an immediate answer.

It must also be observed, that in one place he calls him Jehovah, and in another angel; and indeed he speaks thus indiscriminately of one and the same person. It hence follows that God appeared among the angels. But we must remember what I have already said, that this chief angel was the Mediator and the Head of the Church; and the same is Jehovah, for Christ, as we know, is God manifested in the flesh. There is then no wonder that the Prophet should indiscriminately call him angel and Jehovah, he being the Mediator of the Church, and also God. He is God, being of the same essence with the Father; and Mediator, having already undertaken his Mediatorial office, though not then clothed in our flesh, so as to become our brother; for the Church could not exist, nor be united to her God without a head. We hence see that Christ, as to his eternal essence, is said to be God, and that he is called an angel on account of his office, that is, of a Mediator.

The meaning is now evident: God declares that the horns were those which dispersed or scattered Judah as well as Jerusalem, and the kingdom of Israel: but that he had as many smiths,[1] who would by force and by hammers, shatter

[1] The word, חרשים, is of general import, and means artificers, or workmen either in iron, brass, stone, or wood. It is rendered "workmen" by *Newcome* and *Henderson*, and "carpenters" in our version. They may be viewed here as signifying skilful men, fitted to do the work assigned to them. The terms used to designate what they were to do, would lead us to this supposition; they were to "drive away" and to "thrust away." It was not then a work suitable to any particular trade: hence, "skilful men," would be perhaps the most suitable rendering.

To give the meaning of terrifying to להחריד seems not suitable here: the idea must be similar to that included in ידות, which is introduced as explanatory. To cause to fly or to move quickly, is the most common meaning of the first verb, so that it may be rendered, "drive or hurry away:" and the other verb means to throw or cast out, to hurl, to thrust forth or away. It seems to note a stronger action, or a greater force than the former.

There is here an evident instance in which אלה being repeated must be rendered, *those* and *these*; there is otherwise a confusion in the passage. I offer the following version:—

21. And I said, "What *are* these coming to do?" And he said, saying, "Those *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no one lifted up his head; and these are come to drive them away,—to

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these horns in pieces, though for a time they would greatly harass the Church. It must be also noticed, that horn is to be taken differently when the number is changed: the Gentiles are called horns in the plural number, to show their hardness or their strength; and they are then said to lift up their horn in the singular number, to show that they ferociously exerted all their power to lay prostrate or to scatter the people of God. Then follows—

CHAPTER II.

1. I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring-line in his hand.
2. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length thereof.
3. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,
4. And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein.

1. Et sustuli oculos meos et vidi; et ecce vir in cujus manu funiculus mensuræ.
2. Et dixi, Quo tu vadis? et dixit mihi, Ad metiendum Ierusalem, ut videam quanta latitudo ejus, et quanta longitudo ejus.
3. Et ecce angelus qui loquebatur mecum egressus est, et alter angelus egressus est in occursum ejus;
4. Et dixit ad eum, Curre, dic puero huic, dicendo, In villis (*vel*, pagis) habitabitur Ierusalem præ multitudine hominis et pecoris (*id est*, hominum et pecorum) in medio ejus.

Added now is another vision for the same end; not that the former was difficult to be understood, but because there was need of confirmation in a state of things so disturbed; for though the return of the people was no common evidence of the goodness and favour of God, yet as Jerusalem was not flourishing as formerly, as the temple was like a cottage, as there was no form of a kingdom and no grandeur, it was difficult to believe what had been already exhibited. This is the reason why God confirms by many proofs the same thing; for we know how difficult the contest is, owing to

thrust away the horns of the nations, which have raised the horn over the land of Judah, to scatter it abroad."

Notwithstanding this difference as to the literal rendering of this verse, yet the general drift of *Calvin's* remarks remains the same.—*Ed.*

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the infirmity of the flesh, when grievous and sharp trials assail us.

Hence Zechariah says, that he *saw in the hand of a man a measuring line.* He calls him a man, who appeared in the form of man; and it is well known, and a common thing, that angels are called men. For though they put on a human form only for a time, yet as it was the Lord's will that they should be seen in that form, they are called men, though with no propriety. If it be asked, whether angels did really put on human nature? the obvious answer is, that they never, strictly speaking, became really men. But we know that God treats us as children; and there is the same reason for the expression as for the thing itself. How was it that angels appeared in human form? even that their access to men might be easier. Hence God calls them men as in this place. Zechariah then says, that an angel appeared to him in the form of a man, having in his hand a measuring line.

He then asks him where he was going; the answer given is, *to measure Jerusalem, to see what was its breadth and its length.* The design of the prophecy is then stated, *Behold, inhabited shall be Jerusalem throughout all its villages,*[1] as it could not contain within its walls so large a multitude of men. God then would so increase his people, that they could not be contained within its walls, but that the limits of the Church would be spacious. *Inhabited* then *shall be Jerusalem throughout all its villages,* that is, through the whole country around. This is the meaning.

We now see the design of the Holy Spirit. As a small portion only had returned from exile, the faithful might have become disheartened when they found that the restoration of the Church was very far from being so splendid as what had been so often predicted and promised. It was therefore necessary that they should be encouraged, in order that they might patiently wait while God was performing by degrees, and step by step, what he had testified. That

[1] Literally it is, "villages shall Jerusalem inhabit;" Jerusalem is to be taken, as "land" in ch. i. 21, for its inhabitants. פרזות were villages, open, unwalled, not fortified.—*Ed.*

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they might not then confine God's favour to a short period, or to a few days, the Prophet says here, that the measure of Jerusalem was different in the sight of God from what it was in the sight of men. With regard to the *line*, it was according to the ancient custom; for we know that they did not then use a ten foot pole or some such measure, but a line.

The Prophet, by saying that he *raised up his eyes and saw* this man, reminds us that Jerusalem was to be regarded prospectively: for they could hardly be induced then to build the city as a small and obscure town. We hence see that a difference is to be here noticed between the external aspect of Jerusalem, such as it was then, and its future condition, for which they were to look though not then visible. This then is the design of the prophecy, when it is said, that when Zechariah raised up his eyes, he saw a measure or a line in the hand of a man. He further reminds us that he was attentive to these visions, for by asking he proves that he was not asleep or indifferent, as many are who extinguish every light by their sloth; and I wish there was no such torpor prevailing among us in the present day! for we justly suffer punishment for our contempt, whenever we heedlessly and negligently attend to what God sets before us. Let us then learn greater attention and diligence from the Prophet's example.

He asks where he was going, the answer given is, *to measure:* and then he shows what would be the measure of Jerusalem, that it would hereafter extend beyond the walls, as that compass would not contain the vast number of the people. "God will extend," he says, "far and wide the holy city; it will no longer be confined as before to its own walls, but will be inhabited through all its villages." There is then no doubt but that God intended here to bear witness respecting the propagation of his Church, which was to follow a long time afterwards, even after the coming of Christ. For though Jerusalem became wealthy and also large in its compass, and, as it is well known, a triple city, and heathen writers say that it was among the first of the cities of the East when Babylon was still existing, yet this prophecy

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was not verified in the state of Jerusalem, for it was not inhabited without its walls, nor did it spread through the whole of Judea. We hence conclude, that the spiritual Jerusalem is here described, which differs from all earthly cities.

It is said, that the angel *went forth*, and that *another angel met* him. It hence appears as from the whole of what the Prophet says, how carefully God provides for the safety of his Church; for he has ever angels as his emissaries, who hasten at his nod, and aid the Church in its necessities. Since then angels thus unite to secure the wellbeing of the Church, we hence perceive how dear to God are the faithful, in whose favour he thus employs all his angels; and we also see, that it was the Lord's will that this prophecy should be clear and manifest to all the godly: go, and *run to that young man*, he says, and *tell* him. Zechariah had indeed asked for an explanation of the measure in the man's hand, but from the fact that another angel met him, it appears, as I have already said, that God does not neglect the request and prayers of his people, provided only that they are desirous of learning; he will then perform the part of a true and faithful teacher towards them. But the word *run*, ought especially to be noticed: "go," he says, "and even hasten, lest the youth should longer doubt, and explain the purpose of this prophecy." He calls the Prophet a youth, because he was then among angels. He would not call him a man of full age, because he had before called an angel man. What rank could the Prophet hold among angels except that of a youth? This circumstance ought therefore to be observed as the reason why Zechariah spoke disparagingly or humbly of himself.

Now as to the import of the prophecy, we have already said, that here is described the heavenly Jerusalem, which is surrounded by no walls, but is open to the whole world, and which depends not on its own strength, but dwells safely though exposed on all sides to enemies; for the Prophet says not without reason, "through the villages shall Jerusalem be inhabited;" that is, it shall everywhere be inhabited, so that it will have no need of defence to restrain or hinder enemies

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to come near; for a safe rest shall be given to it, when every one shall quietly occupy his own place. It follows—

5. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.	5. Et ego illi, dicit Iehova, murus ignis (*vel*, igneus) in circuitu, et in gloriam ero in medio ejus.

He confirms in this verse what I have just mentioned—that Jerusalem would be safe, though without any fortifications; for God alone would be sufficient for walls, for towers, for fortresses, according to what is said by other Prophets: "God will be to thee a wall and a fortress," (Is. xxvi. 1,) again, "he will be to thee a stronghold." It is, therefore, a sentence in accordance with other prophecies when Jehovah testifies, that he would be a *wall of fire*. We indeed know, that though walls may be high and thick, they may be scaled by enemies; but who will dare to throw himself into the fire? It is then the same as though God had spoken thus—"Though there will be no watchmen to defend Jerusalem, no soldiers to protect it, in short, no guardians whatever, yet I alone shall be sufficient; for I shall not only be a wall to keep off enemies, but I shall be also a fire to fill them with terror."

He then adds, *I will be for glory in the midst of her;* as though he had said, "the real happiness of Jerusalem, within and without, will be in me alone and in my favour: within, in the midst of her I will be for glory; I will adorn her with every thing praiseworthy; and when there shall be any fear from the assault of enemies, I will be to her a wall of fire. For though she will not excel in strongholds and towers, and be without walls and fortresses, and shall be thus exposed to many evils, I shall yet strike all enemies with terror, so that they shall be kept afar off; and my Church shall be thus preserved safe, though destitute of all human aids, and without any defence."

We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet to be this—that though the Jews saw that they were but few in number, weak in strength, wretched and despised, they had yet reason to entertain hope; for though few returned from exile God was yet able to increase the Church and to make

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it a vast multitude, and that this was certain and decreed, for it was shown by the vision, that however unequal they were to their enemies, God was still sufficiently strong and powerful to defend them; and that however destitute they were of all blessings, God was still rich enough to enrich them, provided they relied on the blessing which he had promised; for he had engaged to render them happy and blessed within, and safe from enemies from without.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are on every side surrounded by many enemies, and as Satan never ceases to kindle the fury of many, not only to be hostile to us, but also to destroy and consume us,—O grant that we may learn to raise up our eyes to heaven, and trusting in thy protection may boldly fight in patience, until that shall appear which thou hast once testified in this remarkable prophecy, that there are many smiths in thine hand, and many hammers, by which thou breakest in pieces those horns which rise up to scatter us, and until at length, after having overcome all the devices of Satan, we shall reach that blessed rest which has been provided for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-eighth.

6. Ho, ho, *come forth*, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord.

6. Heus! heus! et fugite è terra Aquilonis, dicit Iehova; quia in quatuor ventos cœlorum dispersi vos, dicit Iehova.

That the design of the Prophet may be more clear, we must especially bear in mind the history of the case. When it was allowed the Jews, by the edict of Cyrus and of Darius, to return to their own land, that kindness was suspected by many, as though the two kings had a wish suddenly to oppress them when they had gained their object in their return. Some who dwelt comfortably among the Chaldeans and in other places, preferred to enjoy their rest rather than to return with so much trouble to their own country, where there were no houses prepared, and where there were only dreary

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desolations. As then the greater part of the people thus slighted the singular favour of God, of which the Prophets had so often spoken, it was necessary that this sloth, connected as it was with great impiety, should be reproved. For if any religion had touched their hearts, they must have preferred Jerusalem to the whole world, and the service of God to all earthly advantages and pleasures. Hence the self-indulgence in which the Jews had become torpid, deserved a sharp and severe reproof. This is the reason why the Prophet treats them here with so much sharpness, for otherwise they could not have been roused.

Ho! Ho! he says, as though he had said, "What means this delay? for when God has opened the door for you, ye still take your rest, as though Judea were not your inheritance, as though there were no difference between you and the profane heathens." We now understand the object of the Prophet.

The particle הוֹי, *evi*, is used for stimulating them; and by it the Prophet reprehends their indifference, which was a proof, as I have said, of ingratitude; for the Jews in this way showed their contempt of that favour, which ought to have been preferred far before all the wealth and the pleasures of the world.

But the reason which is added seems far-fetched, or even unsuitable—*For to the four winds of heaven have I scattered you;* for this could not have served to rouse the Jews to leave Babylon, and to return to the holy land promised to them by God. Yet it was very efficacious towards producing an impression on their minds; for the Lord shows, in these words, that it was in his power to restore them in safety, inasmuch as they had not been scattered here and there, except through his just vengeance. Had their enemies prevailed against them, or had they without reason been expelled from their country, a doubt might have crept in whether the promise could be relied on; but when it appeared evident that their exile was a punishment inflicted by God, they might safely conclude that he would become the author of their restoration; for he who had inflicted the wound was able to heal it.

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We now then see what the Prophet had in view: he intimates that the Jews had hitherto suffered punishment from God, because they obeyed not his word, but provoked by their obstinacy his extreme vengeance; they ought then now to entertain hope, because God was pacified towards them and ready to forgive them. As then their exile was from God, the Prophet intimates that their return would not be difficult when God became reconciled to them, because the Jews had to do only with the heavenly Judge himself. In short, the Prophet designs to show that the Jews acted foolishly by continuing in exile, when liberty was given them to return; and therefore he exhorts them to hasten in time, lest the season of God's favour should pass away, and thus the door be again closed against them. That they might not hesitate whether this was possible, he shows that it was in God's power, for he had driven them from their country; it would not therefore be difficult for him to open a way for their return whenever he pleased.[1] He now adds—

7. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest *with* the daughter of Babylon.	7. Heus Sion! servare, quæ habitas apud filiam Babylonis.

The Prophet repeats the same thing, though briefly, and

[1] Provided we adopt ב, countenanced by several MSS., and the Syriac, instead of כ in the received text, that is before the number "four," this explanation is the most satisfactory. But if we take the received text, countenanced by a greater number of MSS., there will be another meaning to the sentence. *Henderson's* version is—

For as the four winds of heaven
Have I spread you abroad, saith Jehovah.

But its connection with the foregoing he does not clearly point out. The view taken by *Drusius*, followed by *Grotius* and *Marckius*, seems most satisfactory. They take the verb פרשׂ in the sense of expanding, enlarging, setting at liberty, and that the reference is to the previous liberty granted to the Jews; and thus the connection with the foregoing line is obvious and natural—

Ho! Ho!
Flee now from the land of the north, saith Jehovah;
For as the four winds of heaven
Have I expanded you, (or set you free,) saith Jehovah.

They had been allowed liberty to go to any part of the world, which is signified by the four winds. The next verse is—

Ho! Sion, escape,
Thou who dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.

The two nations are compared to two women, dwelling one with another. —*Ed.*

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in other words: but while he briefly touches on what he meant to say, he confirms and renders more plain the contents of the former verse. He shows that it was a very great disgrace that Babylon should become as it were the grave of Sion; for God had chosen that mount as the place where he was to be worshipped. Babylon, we know, was a filthy cavern, accursed by God. It was therefore to subvert, as it were, the order of nature, for the Jews to bury, so to speak, the holy mount of God in that infernal region. This mode of speaking appears on the first view somewhat harsh, but it is yet most suitable; for by Sion the Prophet means the Jews, who were still dispersed in Chaldea. The temple had not indeed been moved from its place, but only burnt and destroyed by the Chaldeans, and there was no other temple built among the Babylonians. What then does the Prophet mean by saying, *O Sion, who dwellest with the daughter of Babylon*, return to thine own place? He even reminds the Jews that they were bound, as it were, to the temple; for it was a sacred and an indissoluble bond of mutual union between God and them. (1 Kings vi. 13.) For when God proposed that a temple should be built for him on mount Sion, he at the same time added, "I will dwell among you; this is my rest." (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) Since the Jews, then, became united to their God, the temple was introduced as a pledge of this sacred union. Thus justly and fitly does the Prophet give the name of Sion to the Jews; for they were, as it has been said, tied as it were to the temple, except they meant to deny God. Hence he says, "Is it right that you should dwell among the Chaldeans? for ye are as it were the stones of God's temple. There is therefore for you no fixed and permanent abode except on mount Sion, as you are in a sense that very mount itself." Therefore he says, "Sion, hasten and return to thine own place; for it is strange and preposterous that thou shouldest dwell with the daughter of Babylon."

In short, the Prophet shows that God's favour ought not to have been rejected, when he stretched forth his hand, and gave them a free liberty to return. As then God thus appeared as the deliverer of his people, the Jews ought not to

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have remained exiles, but immediately to ascend to Jerusalem, that they might again worship God. And why did the Prophet mention this? that the Jews might know that they had nothing to fear, though surrounded with dangers; that though Satan suggested many perils, many difficulties, many troubles, yet the grace of God would not be defective, or evanescent, or fallacious, but that he would complete his work, and not disappoint those to whom he had once testified, that there would be to them again a quiet habitation in the land of Judah. It now follows—

8. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

8. Quia sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Post gloriam misit me ad gentes quæ spoliant vos; quia qui tangit vos tangit pupillam oculi sui (*vel*, ejus.)

The Prophet pursues the same subject; for he shows that the way was not opened to the Jews that they might soon after repent of their return, but that the Lord might be with them, as their deliverance was a signal proof of his kindness, and an evidence that he would complete what he had begun. He then says, that by God's order the Gentiles would be restrained from effecting any thing in opposition to the Jews; as though he had said, "Your liberty has been granted by Cyrus and by Darius; many rise up to hinder your return, but whatever they may attempt they shall effect nothing; for God shall check all their efforts, and frustrate all their attempts." But God's herald does here publicly testify, that he was commissioned to prevent the nations from doing any injury, and to declare that the people brought back to Judea were holy to the Lord, and that it was not permitted that they should be injured by any. This is the import of the whole.

But a difficulty occurs here, for the context seems not consistent: *Thus saith Jehovah*, Jehovah *sent me;* for it is not the Prophet who receives here the office of a herald; but it seems to be ascribed to God, which appears inconsistent; for whose herald can God be? and by whose order or command could he promulgate what the Prophet here relates? It seems not then suitable to ascribe this to God,

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though the words seem to do so—*Thus saith Jehovah, After the glory he sent me to the nations:* Who is the sender? or who is he who orders or commands God? We hence conclude that Christ is here introduced, who is Jehovah, and yet the Angel or the messenger of the Father. Though then the being of God is one, expressed by the word Jehovah, it is not improper to apply it both to the Father and to the Son. Hence God is one eternal being; but God in the person of the Father commands the Son, who also is Jehovah, to restrain the nations from injuring the Jews by any unjust violence. The rabbins give this explanation—that the Prophet says that he himself was God's herald, and thus recites his words; but this is forced and unnatural. I indeed wish not on this point to contend with them; for being inclined to be contentious, they are disposed to think that we insist on proofs which are not conclusive. But there are other passages of Scripture which more clearly prove the divinity and the eternal existence of Christ, and also the distinction of persons. If however any one closely examines the words of the Prophet, he will find that this passage must be forcibly wrested, except it be understood of Christ. We then consider that Christ is here set forth as the Father's herald; and he says that he was sent to the nations.

What he adds—*After the glory*, is understood by some to mean, that after the glory had ceased, in which the Jews had hitherto boasted, the message of Christ would then be directed to the Gentiles. The meaning, then, according to them is this—that shortly after the glory of the chosen people should depart, Christ, by the Father's command, would pass over to the nations to gather a Church among them. But this passage may be also applied to the nations, who had cruelly distressed the Church of God; as though he had said—"Though your enemies have had for a time their triumphs, yet their glory being brought to an end, God will send his messenger, so that they who have spoiled you may become your prey." It still seems probable to me that the Prophet speaks of the glory which he had shortly before mentioned. We may then view him as saying, that as God had begun to exercise his power, and had in a won-

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derful manner restored his people, there would be no intermission until he had fully established his Church, so as to make the priesthood and the kingdom to flourish again. Then *after the glory*, imports as much as this—"Ye see the beginning of God's favour, by which his power shines forth." For doubtless it was no common instance of the Lord's glory, which he had manifested in restoring his people; and thus the Prophet encourages their confidence, inasmuch as God had already in part dealt in a glorious manner with them. He then takes an argument from what had been commenced, that the Jews might hope to the end, and fully expect the completion of their deliverance. "The Lord," as it is said elsewhere, "will not forsake the work of his own hands." (Ps. cxxxviii. 8.) So the Prophet says now, *After the glory*, that is, "since God has once shone upon you in no common manner, ought you not to entertain hope; for he intended not to disappoint you of a full return to your country, but to fulfil what he had promised by his Prophets?"

As God had spoken of the restoration of his Church, and also of its perpetual condition, the Prophet here indirectly reproves the ingratitude of those who were not convinced that God would be faithful to the end, by seeing performed the commencement of his work. For as God had included both the return of his people and their continued preservation, so also his people ought to have included both favours: "The Lord, who has already begun to restore his people, will defend to the end those whom he has gathered, until their full and perfect redemption will be secured." As then the Jews did not look for the end, though God led them as it were by the hand to the land of hope, the Prophet says to them, *After the glory*.

We may farther observe, that the glory mentioned here was not as yet fully conspicuous; it had begun, so to speak, to glimmer, but it did not shine forth in full splendour until Christ came. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, "God has already emitted some sparks of his glory, it will increase until it attains a perfect brightness. The Lord in the meantime will cause, not only that the nations

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may restrain themselves from doing any wrong, but also that they may become a prey to you."[1]

The reason for the order follows, *Whosoever touches you, touches the apple of his own eye*, or, of his eye; for the pronoun may be applied to any one of the heathen nations as well as to God himself; and the greater part of interpreters prefer taking it as referring to any one of the nations. *Whosoever touches you touches the apple of his own eye;* we say in French, *Ils se donnent en l'œil;* that is, "Whosoever will assail my people will strike out his own eyes; for whatever your enemies may devise against you, shall fall on their own heads." It will be the same as though one by his own sword should pierce his own heart. When therefore the nations shall consider you to be in their power, the Lord shall cause that they shall pierce their own eyes, or wound their own breasts, for the import is the same. *Whosoever* then *touches you, touches the apple of his own eye;* there is no reason why you should fear, for however powerful your enemies may be, yet their fury shall not be allowed to rage against you; for

[1] It would be almost endless to give the expositions which have been offered on the phrase, "After the glory," אחר כבוד. *Henderson* very justly rejects what has been proposed by *Newcome*, *Blayney*, and *Gesenius*, and other German divines, who, following *Castalio* and *Cocceius*, render the line—After glory (*i. e.* to obtain glory) hath he sent me.

Some of the fathers, such as *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, *Cyril*, and *Theodoret*, viewed the "glory" here as that which the Son enjoyed with the Father before he became incarnate; but this view in no degree comports with the context, though most divines, ancient and modern, consider that Christ is the Jehovah of hosts in this verse. The paraphrase of the Targum is the following—"After the glory which he has said he would bring to you;" and this is substantially the meaning given by *Calvin*, and adopted by *Henderson*. Without altering the general meaning, another construction may be given—

For thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
"Another glory!"—he has sent me to the nations,
Who have plundered you;
For he who touched you
Touched the apple of his eye.

"Another glory" is an allusion to the glory mentioned in verse 5: he would not only be a glory in the midst of them, but would confer on them another glory by destroying their enemies.

Blayney seemed "certain" that the *eye* refers to every enemy of the Jews, and not to God; but the greater certainty seems to be on the other side; it is the most natural and obvious construction of the passage. See Deut. xxxii. 10. Not only *Calvin* gives the preference to this view, but also *Grotius*, *Marckius*, and *Henderson*.—*Ed.*

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God shall cause them to kill themselves by their own swords, or to pull out their eyes by their own fingers. This is the meaning, if we understand the passage of the enemies of the Church.

But it may also be suitably applied to God: *Whosoever touches you, touches the apple of his eye;* and to this view I certainly am more inclined; for this idea once occurs in Scripture, "He will protect us as the apple of his eye." (Psalm xvii. 8.) As then the Holy Spirit has elsewhere used this similitude, so I am disposed to regard this passage as intimating, that the love of God towards the faithful is so tender that when they are hurt he burns with so much displeasure, as though one attempted to pierce his eyes. For God cannot otherwise set forth how much and how ardently he loves us, and how careful he is of our salvation, than by comparing us to the apple of his eye. There is nothing, as we know, more delicate, or more tender, than this in the body of man; for were one to bite my finger, or prick my arm or my legs, or even severely to wound me, I should feel no such pain as by having my eye or the pupil of my eye injured. God then by this solemn message declares, that the Church is to him like the apple of his eye, so that he can by no means bear it to be hurt or touched. It afterwards follows:—

9. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.

9. Quia ecce ego agitans (*vel*, agito) manum meam super eos; et erunt præda servis suis; et scietis quod Iehova exercituum miserit me.

Christ continues to relate the commands of the Father: for he speaks in his person, when he says, *Behold, I shake my hand over them,* that is, enemies; *and they shall be a prey to their own servants.* He means, that however numerous and strong the enemies would be who would seek to injure the Jews, they would yet be safe; for they would be protected by the hand of God, and not only so, but that whatever their enemies would attempt to do would be in vain, for the Lord would degrade them, and render them a prey to the Jews themselves:

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for by *servants*[1] he doubtless means the Jews, who, for a time, had been oppressed by the tyranny of their enemies.

It is certain that this prophecy was not fulfilled at the time when the Jews thought that they were in a flourishing state, and enjoying prosperity; for their condition was even then very wretched and degrading. For whence had they their kings? Certainly not from the tribe of Judah; and we also know how tyrannically they were governed, and also that the kingdom was filled with many abominable sins and cruelties. They were become parricides almost all; and whosoever will read their history will find, that brethren were oppressed by brethren, and that even parents were cruelly and wickedly treated. In short, not to say of other things, nothing could have been more abominable than the family of Herod. We cannot then apply this prophecy to that time which intervened between the return from the Babylonian exile, and the coming of Christ. It is then only under the kingdom of Christ that God accomplished what is here said,—that enemies became a prey to his spiritual people, that is, when they were subdued and brought under the yoke of Christ, for as we have said elsewhere, the government of the Church is vested in its Head. Hence where Christ shines, there the Church, which is his body, is said to reign; for Christ's will is, that he should have nothing apart from his members.

We now see the intention of the Prophet: he wished to dispel the fear of the Jews, that they might not hesitate to return to their country; for not only a way was opened for them, but confirmed also and certain was their happiness under God's protection; as he had not in vain begun a glorious work, but fully purposed to carry it on to the end.

He says, *Behold, I shake my hand.* The shaking of the

[1] עבריהם, "their slaves," *Henderson*. The Jews had been held in a state of slavery by the nations. *Newcome* considers that the nations who oppressed the Jews are meant, that they were to be reduced by other nations to the condition of slaves, as the Babylonians were to the Medes and Persians, and he refers to Hag. ii. 23. But as the Jews are especially addressed in the next line, it is obvious to consider them as here intended. And *Grotius* refers the *literal* fulfilment of what is here said to the time of the Maccabees.—*Ed.*

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hand shows that God has no need of many forces to put to flight his enemies, nor of a large expedition; for as soon as he raises up his hand, he lays them all prostrate. In short, the Prophet reminds us, that God has hands which extend far, for he can by mere shaking conquer all enemies, however distant they may be. And then we see that the facility with which God executes his purpose was mentioned, in order that the Jews might feel assured, that as soon as it would please God to put forth his strength, he would have no difficulty; for by the single motion of his finger he could destroy all the enemies who might rise up against them.

He afterwards adds, *And ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts has sent me.* To consider this as an address to the faithful, may not seem suitable; for faith is connected with knowledge, as we are taught by John, "We know that we are the children of God," (1 John iii. 2;) for the certainty which rests on God's word exceeds all knowledge. Why then does the Prophet say, And ye shall know that Jehovah has sent me? for the faithful ought to have been previously certain respecting the mission of Christ; otherwise an approach to God was closed up; for an access, we know, to his favour is opened by faith. The Jews must have then been assured from the beginning respecting the mission of Christ. But it is to be observed, that there are two kinds of knowledge,—the knowledge of faith, and what they call experimental knowledge. The knowledge of faith is that by which the godly feel assured that God is true—that what he has promised is indubitable; and this knowledge at the same time penetrates beyond the world, and goes far above the heavens, that it may know hidden things; for our salvation is concealed; things seen, says the Apostle, are not hoped for. (Rom. viii. 24.) It is then no wonder that the Prophet says, that the faithful shall then know that Christ has been sent by the Father, that is, by actual experience, or in reality: *Ye shall* then *know that Jehovah has sent me.* He afterwards adds—

10. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.

10. Exulta et lætare filia Sion, quia ecce ego venio, et habitabo in medio tui, dicit Iehova.

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He continues the same subject. The meaning is, that God begins nothing which he does not determine to bring to its end. Since then he had already begun to gather his people, that they might dwell in the Holy Land, it was a work in progress, at length to be completed; for the Lord's will was not to be a half Redeemer. This is the purport of what the Prophet says.

But he now exhorts Sion to *rejoice*, as though the happiness which he predicts was already enjoyed. This mode of speaking, as we have seen elsewhere, is common among the Prophets. When they intended to animate God's servants to a greater confidence, they brought them as it were into the midst of what was promised, and dictated a song of thanksgiving. We are not wont to congratulate ourselves before the time. When, therefore, the Prophets bade the Church to sing to God and to give thanks, they thus confirmed the promises made to them; as though the Prophet had said, that as yet indeed the brightness and glory of God was in a great measure hid, but that the faithful were beyond the reach of danger, and that therefore they could boldly join in a song of thanks to God, as though they were already enjoying full redemption; for the Lord will perfect what he begins.

Rejoice then *and exult, thou daughter of Sion*,—Why? *For I come.* God had already come; but here he expresses the progress of his favour, by declaring that he would come; as though he had said, "I have already given you obscure tokens of my presence; but you shall find another coming which will be much more effectual to confirm your faith." Though then God had already appeared to the Jews, yet he says that he would come, that is, when Christ would come forth, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in whom God's perfect glory and majesty shines forth. And hence also does it more evidently appear what I have already said, that this address cannot be applied without perversion to the Prophet, nor be suitably applied to the person of the Father. It then follows that Christ speaks here: but he does not speak as a man or an angel; he speaks as God the Redeemer. We hence see that the name

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Jehovah is appropriated to Christ, and that there is no difference between the Father and the Son as to essence, but that they are only to be distinguished as to their persons. Whenever then Christ announces his own divinity, he takes the name Jehovah; but he also shows, that there is something peculiar and distinct belonging to him as the messenger of the Father. For this reason, and in this respect, he is inferior to the Father; that is, because he is sent as a messenger, and executes what has been entrusted to him. These things do not militate the one against the other, as many unlearned and turbulent men think, who entangle themselves in many vain imaginations, or rather in mere ravings, and say, "How can it be, that there is one eternal God, and yet that Christ, who is distinct from the Father, and is called his angel, is a true God?" So they imagine that the origin of divinity is God the Father, as though the one true God had begotten, and thus produced another God from himself, as by propagation. But these are diabolical figments, by which the unity of the Divine essence is destroyed. Let us then bear in mind what the Prophet teaches here clearly and plainly,—that Christ is Jehovah, the only true God, and yet that he is sent by God as a Mediator.

Behold I come, he says, *and I will dwell in the midst of thee.* God dwelt then among the Jews, for the building of the temple had been begun, and sacrifices had been already offered; but this dwelling was typical only. It hence follows, that some new kind of presence is here pointed out, when God was to reveal himself to his people, not under ceremonial figures and symbols, but by dwelling, at the fulness of time, substantially among them; for Christ is the temple of the Godhead, and so perfectly unites us to God the Father, that we are one with him. And it ought further to be carefully borne in mind, that the Prophet does here also make a distinction between the ancient types of the law and the reality, which was at length exhibited in Christ; for there is no need now of shadows, when we enjoy the reality, and possess the completion of all those things which God only shadowed forth under the law.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest that we continually tremble in the midst of dangers, and often stumble and fall through the infirmity of our flesh,— O grant, that we may learn so to rely on the strength and help which thou promisest to us, that we may not hesitate to pass through all kinds of dangers, and boldly and firmly to fight under thy banner; and may we be thus gathered more and more into the unity of thy Church, until having finished all our troubles and contests, we shall at length reach that blessed and celestial rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-ninth.

11. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

11. Et adjungent se gentes multæ, (*vel*, magnæ) ad Iehovam in die illa; et erunt illi in populum, et habitabo in medio tui; et scies quòd Iehova exercituum miserit me ad te.

The Prophet describes here the voluntary surrender of the nations, who would so join themselves to the Church of God, as to disown their own name and to count themselves Jews: and this is what the Prophet borrowed from those who had predicted the same thing; but he confirms their testimony, that the Jews might know that the propagation of the Church had not been promised to them in vain by so many witnesses. That what is said here refers to the calling of the nations who would willingly surrender themselves to God, is quite evident; for it is said that they *would be a people* to God. This could not be, except the nations surrendered their own name, so as to become one body with the Jews. He then repeats what he had said, that God would dwell in the midst of Judea. Of this dwelling something was said yesterday; for as they had already begun to offer sacrifices in the temple, it follows that God was already dwelling among them. We must then necessarily come to another kind of dwelling, even that which God, who had before testified by many proofs that he was nigh the Jews, had at length accomplished through Christ; for Christ is

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really Immanuel, and in him God is present with us in the fulness of his power, justice, goodness, and glory.

He at last adds, *Thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts has sent me to thee.* Something has also been said on this sentence: the Prophet means, that it would be evident by what would really take place, that these things had not been in vain foretold, as the prophecy would be openly fulfilled before the eyes of all. Then shalt thou know, not by the assurance of faith, which is grounded on the word, but by actual experience. But he expresses more than before, for he says, "Thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts has sent me to thee." The particle אֵלַיִךְ, *alik*, "to thee," is not superfluous; for he said a little while before, that he was sent to the nations. As he now says, that he would be the guardian of the chosen people, he also declares that his mission was to them; and he gives to God the name of *Jehovah of hosts*, that the Jews might feel assured that there would be no difficulty sufficient to hinder or delay the work of God, as he possessed supreme power, so that he could easily execute whatever he had decreed. I will not repeat now what I said yesterday of Christ; but we ought nevertheless to remember this, that he who declares that he was sent, is often called Jehovah. It hence appears that one and the same divine eternal essence is in more persons than one. Let us go on—

12. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

12. Et hæreditario accipiet Iehova Iehudah partem suam in terra sancta; et eliget adhuc Ierusalem.

The Prophet confirms the former doctrine, but removes offences, which might have occurred to the Jews and prevented them from believing this prophecy: for they had been for a time rejected, so that there was no difference between them and other nations. The land of Canaan had been given them as a pledge of their heirship; but they had been thence expelled, and there had been no temple, no public worship, no kingdom. The Jews then might have concluded from all these reasons, that they were rejected by God. Hence the Prophet here promises that they were to be re-

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stored again to their former state and to their own place. *Jehovah,* he says, *will take Judah as his hereditary portion;* that is, God will really show that he has not forgotten the election by which he had separated the Jews for himself; for he intended them to be to him a peculiar people. They were now mixed with the nations; their dispersion seemed an evidence of repudiation; but it was to be at length manifest that God was mindful of that adoption, by which he once purposed to gather the Jews to himself, that their condition might be different from that of other nations. When therefore he says, that Judah would be to God for an heritage or for an hereditary portion, he brings forward nothing new, but only reminds them that the covenant by which God chose Judah as his people would not be void, for it would be made evident in its time.

And the following clause is to the same purpose, *And he will again choose Jerusalem:* for it was not then for the first time that Jerusalem became the city of God when restoration took place, but the election, which existed before, was now in a manner renewed conspicuously in the sight of men. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, "The course of God's favour has indeed been interrupted, yet he will again show that you have not been in vain chosen as his people, and that Jerusalem, which was his sanctuary, has not been chosen without purpose." The renovation of the Church, then, is what the Prophet means by these words.

What we have said elsewhere ought at the same time to be noticed, that the word *choose* is not to be taken here in its strict sense; for God does not repeatedly choose those whom he regards as his Church. God's election is one single act, for it is eternal and immutable. But as Jerusalem had been apparently rejected, the word choose imports here that God would make it evident, that the first election had ever been unchangeable, however hidden it may have been to the eyes of men. He then adds—

13. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

13. Sile (*vel,* sileat) omnis caro à facie Iehovæ; quia excitatus est ex habitaculo sanctitatis suæ (*hoc est,* ex loco suo sancto.)

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Here is a sealing of the whole prophecy. The Prophet highly extols the power of God, that the Jews might not still doubt or fear as with regard to things uncertain. He says that whatever he had hitherto declared was indubitable; for God would put forth his power to succour his Church and to remove whatever hindrance there might be. We have seen similar expressions elsewhere, that is, in the second chapter of Habakkuk and in the first of Zephaniah; and these Prophets had nearly the same object in view; for Habakkuk, after having spoken of the restoration of the people, thus concludes,—that God was coming forth to bid silence to all nations, that no one might dare to oppose when it was his will to redeem his Church. So also Zephaniah, after having described the slaughter of God's enemies, when God ordered sacrifices to be made to him as it were from the whole world, uses the same mode of expression, as though he had said, that there would be nothing to resist the power of God. It is the same here, *Silent*, he says, *let all flesh be before Jehovah.* It is, in short, the shout of triumph, by which Zechariah exults over all the enemies of the Church, and shows that they would rage in vain, as they could effect nothing, however clamorous they might be.

By silence we are to understand, as elsewhere observed, submission. The ungodly are not indeed silent before God, so as willingly to obey his word, or reverently to receive what he may bid or command, or humbly to submit under his powerful hand; for these things are done only by the faithful. Silence, then, is what especially belongs to the elect and the faithful; for they willingly close their mouth to hear God speaking. But the ungodly are also said to be silent, when God restrains their madness: and how much soever they may inwardly murmur and rage, they yet cannot openly resist; so that he completes his work, and they are at length made ashamed of the swelling words they have vomited forth, when they pass off in smoke. This is the sense in which the Prophet says now, *silent be all flesh.* He means, in short, by these words, That when God shall go forth to deliver his Church, he will be terrible; so that all who had before furiously assailed his chosen people, shall be constrained to tremble.

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With regard to *the habitation of holiness*, I explain it of the temple rather than of heaven. I indeed allow that heaven is often thus called in Scripture: and it is called the palace or temple of God, for we cannot think as we ought of God's infinite glory, except we are carried above the world. This is the reason why God says that he dwells in heaven. But as the Church is spoken of here, Zechariah, I doubt not, means the temple. It is indeed certain that there was no temple when God began to rise as one awakened from sleep, to restore his people: but as the faithful are said in Psalm cii. to pity the dust of Sion, because the place continued sacred even in its degradation and ruin; so also in this passage Zechariah says, that God was roused—Whence? *from Sion*, from that despised place, exposed to the derision of the ungodly: yet there God continued to dwell, that he might build again the temple, where his name was to be invoked until Christ appeared. We now see that the temple or Sion is intended rather than heaven, when all circumstances are duly weighed. Now follows—

CHAPTER III.

1. And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

2. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

1. Et ostendit mihi Iehosuah sacerdotem magnum stantem in conspectu angeli Iehovæ, et Satan stantem ad dexteram ejus, ut adversaretur illi.

2. Et dixit Iehova ad Satan, increpet te Iehova, Satan, et increpet (*hoc est*, iterum increpet) te Iehova, qui elegit Ierusalem: annon hic torris erutus ex igne?

We have said at the beginning that Zechariah was sent for this end—to encourage weak minds: for it was difficult to entertain hope in the midst of so much confusion. Some, but a small portion of the nation, had returned with the tribe of Judah: and then immediately there arose many enemies by whom the building of the city and of the temple was hindered; and when the faithful viewed all their circumstances, they could hardly entertain any hope of a redemption such as had been promised. Hence Zechariah laboured

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altogether for this end—to show that the faithful were to look for more than they had reason to expect from the aspect of things at the time, and that they were to direct their eyes and their thoughts to the power of God, which was not as yet manifested, and which indeed God purposely designed not to exercise, in order to try the patience of the people.

This is the subject which he now pursues, when he says, that *Joshua the priest* was shown to him, with *Satan at his right hand to oppose him.*[1] God was, however, there also. But when Zechariah says, that the priest Joshua was shown to him as here represented, it was not only done in a vision, but the fact was known to all; that is, that Joshua was not adorned with a priestly glory, such as it was before the exile; for the dignity of the priest before that time was far different from what it was after the return of the people; and this was known to all. But the vision was given to the Prophet for two reasons—that the faithful might know that their contest was with Satan, their spiritual enemy, rather than with any particular nations—and also that they might understand that a remedy was at hand, for God stood in defence of the priesthood which he had instituted. God, then, in the first place, purposed to remind the faithful that they had to carry on war, not with flesh and blood, but with the devil himself: this is one thing. And then his design was to recall them to himself, that they might consider that he would be their sure deliverer from all dangers. Since we now perceive the design of this prophecy, we shall proceed to the words of the Prophet.

He says that Joshua was shown to him. This was done no

[1] To retain the alliteration of the Hebrew, the words may be thus rendered—"and the opponent standing on his right hand to oppose him," or, "the accuser standing on his right hand to accuse him." The word Satan is rendered here and in Job by the *Septuagint*, "the accuser," or "the devil," ὁ διάβολος. The station on the right hand was that of the plaintiff, or the accuser, or of the pleader, as *Grotius* thinks. See Ps. cix. 6. The word שָׂטָן, according to its use as a verb, participle, or a noun, means an opponent or adversary, rather than an accuser. See Ps. xxxviii. 20; Num. xxii. 22; Gen. xxvi. 21.

Blayney, as well as *Kimchi*, thinks that Sanballat is meant by הַשָּׂטָן; but the article הַ, as it has been observed by *Marckius* and *Henderson*, seems to point out the great enemy of God and man, as ὁ διάβολος in Greek.—*Ed.*

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doubt in a prophetic vision: but yet Zechariah saw nothing by the spirit but what was known even to children. But, as I have already said, we must observe the intention of the vision, which was, that the faithful might understand that their neighbours were troublesome to them, because Satan turned every stone and tried every experiment to make void the favour of God. And this knowledge was very useful to the Jews, as it is to us at this day. We wonder why so many enemies daily rage against us, and why the whole world burn against us with such implacable hatred; and also why so many intrigues arise, and so many assaults are made, which have not been excited through provocation on our part: but the reason why we wonder is this,—because we bear not in mind that we are fighting with the devil, the head and prince of the whole world. For were it a fixed principle in our minds, that all the ungodly are influenced by the devil, there would then be nothing new in the fact, that all unitedly rage against us. How so? Because they are moved by the same spirit, and their father is a murderer, even from the beginning. (John viii. 44.)

We hence see that the faithful were taught what was extremely necessary,—that their troubles arose from many nations, because Satan watched for their ruin. And though this vision was given to the Prophet for the sake of his own age, yet it no doubt belongs also to us; for that typical priesthood was a representation of the priesthood of Christ, and Joshua, who was then returned from exile, bore the character of Christ the Son of God. Let us then know that Christ never performs the work of the priesthood, but that Satan stands at his side, that is, devises all means by which he may remove and withdraw Christ from his office. It hence follows, that they are much deceived, who think that they can live idly under the dominion of Christ: for we all have a warfare, for which each is to arm and equip himself. Therefore at this day, when we see the world seized with so much madness, that it assails us, and would wholly consume us, let not our thoughts be fixed on flesh and blood, for Satan is the chief warrior who assails us, and who employs all the rage of the world to destroy us, if possible, on every side.

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Satan then ever stands at Christ's right hand, so as not to allow him in peace to exercise his priestly office.

Now follows another reason for the prophecy,—that God interposes and takes the part of his Church against Satan. Hence he says, *Rebuke thee Satan let Jehovah,*[1] *rebuke thee let Jehovah, who has chosen Jerusalem.* God speaks here; and yet he seems to be the angel of Jehovah:[2] but this is not inscrutable; for as in the last verse, where Zechariah says that Joshua stood before the angel of Jehovah, Christ is doubtless meant, who is called an angel and also Jehovah; so also he may be named in this verse. But that no contentious person may say that we refine on the words too much, we may take them simply thus,—that God mentions here his own name in the third person; and this mode of speaking is not rare in Scripture, "Jehovah rained from God." (Gen. xix. 24.) Why did Moses speak thus? Even to show that when God fulminated against Sodom, he did not adopt a common mode of proceeding, but openly showed that it was an unusual and a singular judgment. Thus the expression here is emphatic, *Rebuke thee let Jehovah,* that is, I myself will rebuke thee. However, were any one to consider well the whole context, he could not but allow that the words may properly be applied to Christ, who is the portion of his Church, and that therefore he was the angel before whom Joshua stood; and he himself shows afterwards that the Church would be safe under his patronage. *Let Jehovah* then *rebuke thee, Satan, let him rebuke thee.* The repetition

[1] We may render the words,—

Rebuke thee, Satan, will Jehovah,
Yea, rebuke thee will Jehovah,
Who hath chosen Jerusalem.

Thus *Dathius* and *Blayney* render the passage. *Adam Clarke* and *Henderson* adopt the notion that Jude, ver. 9, refers to this vision, taking "the body of Moses" as signifying the Jewish Church; but *Marckius,* evidently for just reasons, rejects this opinion.—*Ed.*

[2] *Newcome* introduces the word angel at the beginning of the second verse unnecessarily, merely on the authority of the Syriac; for in the preceding visions, "Jehovah" and "the angel of Jehovah" are used indiscriminately. It is impossible not to see that here and in the first chapter a person is mentioned as being Jehovah, and the angel or messenger of Jehovah. See on this subject *M'Caul's* observations in his translation of Kimchi on Zechariah, from page 9 to 27.—*Ed.*

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more fully confirms what Zechariah meant to show, even that sufficient protection would be found in God alone for the preservation of the Church, how much soever Satan might employ all his powers for its ruin, and that though God would not immediately give help and restrain Satan, yet a firm hope was to be entertained, for this would be done in time the most seasonable. The import of the whole is,—that though God had hitherto let loose Satan to assail the Church as to the priesthood, yet God would be the faithful guardian of his Church, and would check Satan, that he might not execute what he intended; and further, that many contests must be patiently endured, until the period of the warfare be completed. We now then see what the Prophet had in view in these words.

But the rebuke of God is not to be regarded as being only in words, but must be referred to that power by which God subverts and lays prostrate all the attempts of Satan. At the same time he mentions the end for which this rebuke was given; it was, that the Church might continue safe and secure, *Let Jehovah, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.* These words are to be read, not apart, but as joined with the former, as though he had said, "Let God raise up his hand for the salvation of his chosen people, so as to put thee, Satan, to flight with all thy furies." This is the meaning. Let us therefore know, that God is not simply the enemy of Satan, but also one who has taken us under his protection, and who will preserve us safe to the end. Hence God, as our Redeemer and the eternal guardian of our salvation, is armed against Satan in order to restrain him. The warfare then is troublesome and difficult, but the victory is not doubtful, for God ever stands on our side.

But we are at the same time reminded, that we are not to regard what we have deserved in order to gain help from God; for this wholly depends on his gratuitous adoption. Hence, though we are unworthy that God should fight for us, yet his election is sufficient, as he proclaims war against Satan in our behalf. Let us then learn to rely on the gratuitous adoption of God, if we would boldly exult against Satan and all his assaults. It hence follows, that those men

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who at this day obscure, and seek, as far as they can, to extinguish the doctrine of election, are enemies to the human race; for they strive their utmost to subvert every assurance of salvation.

He at last adds, *Is not this a brand snatched from the fire?*[1] Here God makes known the favour he had manifested towards the high priest, that the faithful might be convinced that Joshua would overcome his enemies, as God would not forsake his own work; for the end ever corresponds with the beginning as to God's favour; he is never wearied in the middle course of his beneficence. This is the reason why he now objects to Satan and says, "Why! God has wonderfully snatched this priest as a brand from the burning: as then the miraculous power of God appears in the return of the high priest, what dost thou mean, Satan? Thou risest up against God, and thinkest it possible to abolish the priesthood, which it has pleased him in his great favour hitherto to preserve. See whence has the priest come forth. While he was in Chaldea, he seemed to be in the lower regions; yet God delivered him from thence: and now, when he sits in the temple and is performing his office, is it possible for thee to pull down from heaven him whom thou couldest not detain in hell?" We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet as to this similitude. He then adds—

3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

4. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

3. Et Iehosuah erat indutus vestibus sordidis; et stabat in conspectu angeli.

4. Et respondit et dixit his qui stabant coram ipso, dicendo, Tollite vestes sordidas ab eo (de super eo, *ad verbum;*) et dixit ad eum, Ecce transire feci (*hoc est*, abstuli) abs te iniquitatem tuam, et vestiam te mutatoriis.

Zechariah adds here another thing,—that Joshua had on mean garments, but that new garments were given him by the angel's command. And by this he means, that though

[1] "Out of *Ur* of the Chaldees, out of the Babylonian fiery furnace."—*Ass. Annot.*

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the priesthood had been for a time contemptible, it would yet recover whatever dignity it had lost. But he ever leads the minds of the faithful to this point,—to look for what they did not then see, nor could conjecture from the state of things at that time. It is certain that the sacerdotal vestments, after the return from exile, were not such as they were before; for they were not sumptuously woven, nor had attached to them so many precious stones. Though Cyrus had bountifully supplied great abundance of gold and silver for the worship of God, yet the chief priest did not so shine with precious stones and the work of the Phrygians as before the exile. Hence, what was shown to Zechariah was then well known to all. But we ought to notice the latter clause,—that the angel commanded a change of garments. The Prophet then bids the faithful to be of good cheer, though the appearance of the priesthood was vile and mean, because God would not overlook its contemptible state; but the time of restoration had not yet come; when it came, the ancient dignity of the priesthood would again appear.

With regard to the words, the first thing to be observed is the fact, that Joshua *stood before the angel*, having on *sordid* or torn *garments*.[1] The repetition seems to be without reason; for he had said before that Joshua stood before the angel of God. Why then does he now repeat that he stood before the angel? That the faithful might take courage; because it was God's evident purpose that the chief priest should remain there in his sordid garments; for we think that God forgets us when he does not immediately succour us, or when things are in a confused state. Hence Zechariah meets this doubt by saying, that Joshua stood before the angel. He further reminded them, that though the whole world should despise the priesthood, it was yet under the eyes of God. Conspicuous were other priests in the eyes of men, and attracted the admiring observation of all, as it is well known; but all heathen priesthoods, we know, were of no account before God. Hence though heathen priesthoods

[1] The word, צוֹאִים, does not mean what is shabby, mean, or tattered, but what is filthy, dirty, as opposed to what is clean. Our version, "filthy," adopted by *Newcome* and *Henderson*, is the most suitable.—*Ed.*

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shone before men, they were yet abominations only in the sight of God; but the priesthood of Joshua, however abject and vile it may have been, was yet, as Zechariah testifies, esteemed before God.

We now see that he who is often said to be Jehovah is called an angel: the name therefore of Angel as well as of Jehovah, I doubt not, ought to be applied to the person of Christ, who is truly and really God, and at the same time a Mediator between the Father and the faithful: and hence he authoritatively commanded the angels who were present; for Christ was there, but with his hosts. While therefore the angels were standing by, ready to obey, he is said to have bidden them to strip the high priest of his mean garments.

Afterwards the angel addresses Joshua himself, *See, I have made to pass from thee thine iniquity, and now I will clothe thee with new* or other *garments.*[1] When the angel said that he had *taken away iniquity*, he justly reminded them of the filthiness contracted by the priest as well as by the people; for they had denuded themselves of all glory by their iniquities. We hence see that the mouths of the Jews were here closed, that they might not clamour against God, because he suffered them still to continue in their sordid condition, for they deserved to continue in such a state; and the Lord for this reason called their filth, iniquity. He further teaches us, that though the Jews fully deserved by their sins to rot in their struggle and filthiness, yet the Lord would not finally allow their unworthiness to prevent him from affording relief.

The import of the prophecy then is this,—That however much the mean outward condition of the high priest might

[1] מחלצות, from חלץ, to set loose, or to put off. Both *Parkhurst* and *Blayney* think that they were the garments which the high priest wore on particular and solemn occasions, and which he *put off* when he had performed his office. "Holy garments" would perhaps be the best rendering. *Newcome* has "goodly apparel;" and *Henderson*, "costly habiliments;" neither of which renderings conveys the idea that they were the peculiar garments of the high priest. And that they were the holy garments, such as the high priest wore on especial occasions, appears probable from what follows respecting the mitre, which formed a part of the high priest's dress. —*Ed.*

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offend the Jews, they were still to entertain hope; for the remedy was in God's power, who would at length change the dishonour and reproach of the high priest into very great glory, even when the time of gratuitous remission or of good pleasure arrived.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast made us a royal priesthood in thy Son, that we may daily offer to thee spiritual sacrifices, and be devoted to thee, both in body and soul,—O grant, that we, being endued with thy power, may boldly fight against Satan, and never doubt but that thou wilt finally give us the victory, though we may have to undergo many troubles and difficulties: and may not the contempt of the world frighten or dishearten us, but may we patiently bear all our reproaches, until thou at length stretchest forth thine hand to raise us up to that glory, the perfection of which now appears in our head, and shall at last be clearly seen in all the members, in the whole body, even when he shall come to gather us into that celestial kingdom, which he has purchased for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fortieth.

5. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.

5. Et dixi, Ponant cidarim puram (*aut*, diadema purum) super caput ejus: et posuerunt diadema super caput ejus, et induerant (*id est*, postquam induerant) illum vestibus: et angelus Iehovæ stabat.

THE Prophet had said that Joshua was clothed in splendid and beautiful garments, who had on before such as were sordid, and that this was done by the command of the angel: he now adds, that he wished that a still greater glory should be bestowed on him, for he saw that something was wanting. He therefore desired that the high priest should be adorned with a crown, so that his dress might in every way correspond with the dignity of his office. But what is here stated, that the Prophet spoke,[1] is not to be taken as spoken authorita-

[1] *Calvin* has followed the punctuists as to the verb "said," in the beginning of the verse, and regarded it as in the first and not in the third

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tively, but rather expressed as a wish, as though he had said, that it was indeed a pleasant and delightful spectacle to see the high priest decently and honourably clothed; but that it was also desirable, that a crown or a diadem should be added, as a symbol of the priesthood, and not of royalty. There is indeed no disadvantage in considering royalty also as signified; for the kingly office, we know, is united with the priestly in the person of Christ: but I take the crown here to be the priest's mitre; for we know that this was the chief ornament whenever the priest came to the altar of incense. But as to the main point, we must bear in mind the design of the Prophet,—that the high priest was adorned with splendid vestments, and yet his dignity appeared only in part; therefore the Prophet desires that a pure crown or mitre should be added: and he says that this took place even in the presence of the angel, thereby intimating that his wish was by God approved.

Now we ought first to contemplate the zeal and godly concern of the Prophet, which he had for the glory and honour of the priesthood; for though he regarded with joy the splendid dress of the high priest, he could not restrain himself from wishing that the highest ornament should be added. And this example is exhibited to us for imitation, so that we ought to desire the increase of those favours of God, by which the priesthood of Christ is signalized, until it arrives at the most perfect state. But we see that many are against such a wish; for at this day there are those who profess some zeal for true religion, but are satisfied with a mere shadow; or at least, it would abundantly satisfy them to see the Church half purified: and the world is full of men who indeed confess that the Church is defiled by many pollutions,

person. It is omitted in the Septuagint, (except in the comp. ed., where it is in the third person,) but the sentence is continued as the words of the angel. *Jerome* has *et dixit*, and he said, that is, the angel. It appears that the *Targum*, the *Syriac*, and the *Vulgate* retain the third person; and *Dathius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson* so render the verb, "And he said," that is, the angel; and this seems more consistent with the general tenor of the passage; for it is more reasonable to suppose that the words which follow are those of the angel than the words of the Prophet, and that the command to put on the mitre issued from the same as the command to clothe the high priest with holy garments.—*Ed.*

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but wish only for some small measure of reformation. But the Prophet seems to invite us to do a very different thing: he saw that the high priest was already adorned with new garments; but when he considered that the honour of the priesthood was not fully restored, he wished the mitre to be also added. And by saying that the angels seconded his wish, he encourages us fully to believe, that if we desire from the heart that his glory should be given to Christ, God will hear our prayers: for the Prophet, when he sighed, did not in vain ask the angel to put a mitre on the high priest.

The expression, that *the angel of God stood*, is not without meaning. He was not an idle spectator; and it is intimated that God had not only once a care for the priesthood, but that the angel was always watching to defend Joshua; for it would not be enough to be once adorned by God, who presides over the Church, except his guardianship were perpetual. We now then understand the import of the words. It follows—

6. And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying,

7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

6. Et contestatus est Angelus Iehovæ Iehosuam dicendo,

7. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Si in viis meis ambulaveris, et custodiam meam custodieris, tu quoque judicabis domum meam (*vel*, gubernabis; דין *est judicare, sed verbum illud refertur ad quodlibet regimen, ut alibi visum;* gubernabis *ergo* domum meam, *hoc est*, præeris Templo meo;) atque etiam custodies atria mea: et dabo tibi transitus inter istos qui adstant.

Here the Prophet shows for what purpose he gave Joshua his appropriate dress and splendour; and he teaches us, that it was not done simply as a favour to man, but because God purposed to protect the honour of his own worship. This is the reason why the angel exhorts Joshua; for it behoves us ever to consider for what end God deals so liberally with us and favours us with extraordinary gifts. All things ought to be referred to his glory and worship, otherwise every good thing he bestows on us is profaned. And this is especially to be regarded when we speak of his Church and

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its government; for we know how ready men are to turn what God gives to his Church to serve the purpose of their own tyranny.

It is God's will that he should be attended to when he speaks by his servants and those whom he has appointed as teachers. But we see from the beginning of the world how ambitious and proud men under this pretence exercised great tyranny, and thus expelled God from his own government: nay, the vassals of Satan often arrogate to themselves a full and unlimited power over all the faithful, because God would have the priesthood honoured, and approves of a right discipline in his Church. As then Satan has in all ages abused the high eulogies by which God commends his Church, this exhortation, now briefly given by the Prophet, ought always to be added; for it is not God's will to extol men, that he himself might be as a private individual and give up his own place and degree, but that the whole excellency bestowed on the Church is intended for this purpose—that God may be purely worshipped, and that all, not only the people, but also the priest, may submit to his authority. Whatever glory then belongs to the Church, God would have it all to be subservient to his purpose, so that he alone may be the supreme and that rightly. We now then perceive the Prophet's design.

And to give some weight to what is taught, he says, that the *angel bore witness;* for the word used is forensic or legal: one is said to bear witness to another, when he uses, so to speak, a solemn protestation. In short, bearing witness differs from a common declaration, as an oath, or an appeal to lawful authority, is interposed, so that the words are sacred. It was then the design of the Holy Spirit by this expression to render us more attentive, so that we may know that not a common thing is said, but that God interposes an oath, or some such thing, in order to secure more reverence to his order or command.

Protest then *did the angel of Jehovah to Joshua, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if my charge thou wilt observe,* &c. The angel now briefly teaches us, that the priests do not excel, that they may exult at pleasure; but he interposes a condition, that they are to

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exercise faithfully their office, and to obey the call of God. We then see that those two things are united—the dignity of the priesthood, and the faithfulness which God's ministers, who have been called to that office, are to exhibit. Hence they who seek to domineer without control, do thereby sufficiently show that they are not the lawful priests of God; for Joshua typified Christ, and yet we see how God bound him by a certain condition, lest relying on his honour and title he should take to himself more than what was lawful or right.

If Joshua, who was a type of Christ, together with his successors, was not to regard himself dignified, but in order to obey God, we hence see how foolish and even abominable is the arrogance of the Pope, who, being content with a naked title, seeks to reduce the whole world to himself, as if God had given up his own right.

But let us at the same time see what he means by *ways* and by *charge*. These two words ought, no doubt, to be confined to the office of the priest. God commands us all in common to follow where he leads us; and whatever he prescribes as to the way of leading a godly and righteous life may be called a charge; for the Lord suffers us not to wander and go astray, but anticipates errors and shows what we are to follow. There is then a general charge with regard to all the faithful; but the priestly charge, as I have already stated, is to be confined to that office. We yet know that men are not raised on high by God, that he may resign his own authority. He indeed commits to men their own offices, and they are rightly called the vicars of God, who purely and faithfully teach from his mouth: but the authority of God is not diminished when he makes use of the labours of men and employs them as his ministers. We hence see that the priestly charge is this—to rule the Church according to the pure Word of God.

He therefore adds, *Thou also shalt govern my house*. This condition then is ever to be observed, when the governors of the Church demand a hearing, even that they *keep the charge* of God. It is indeed true, that all the ministers of the Word are adorned with honourable titles; but, as I have said, their

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dignity is degraded if it obscures the glory of God. As then God would have men to be heard, so that nothing may be taken from him, this condition ought ever to be observed, "Thou shalt govern my house, if thou wilt walk in my ways."

It may however be asked, can priests be rightly deprived instantly of their office when they depart from their duty? To this I answer, that the Church ought, as far as possible, to be reformed; but yet legitimate means ought to be used, so that the Church may reject all the ungodly, who respond not to their duty, nor exhibit due sincerity, nor discharge their office in obedience to God. All then who depart or turn aside from the right course ought rightly to be rejected, but by legitimate authority. But when the majority desire to have pastors, such as cannot but be deemed really wolves, they must be borne with, though unworthy of the honour, and yet so borne with that they be not allowed to oppress the Church with their tyranny, or to take to themselves what belongs to God alone, or to adulterate the worship of God or pure doctrine.

However this may be, none are lawful priests before God, except those who faithfully exercise their office and respond to the calling of God, as we shall hereafter see in the second chapter of Malachi. But I am not disposed to enlarge; it is enough to adduce what an explanation of the passage may require. In short, pastors divinely appointed are so to rule over the Church as not to exercise their own power, but to govern the Church according to what God has prescribed, and in such a manner that God himself may always rule through the instrumentality of men.

What he adds, *Thou shalt keep my courts*, appears not to be an honour to the priest, for it was an humble service to wait in the courts of the temple. But taking a part for the whole, the Prophet includes the charge of the whole temple: and it was no common honour to have the charge of that sacred habitation of God. It is not then improperly added that Joshua would be the keeper of the temple, if he walked in the ways of the Lord. Nevertheless we see at this day how the masked rulers of the Church, under the Papacy, not only

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disregard the keeping of the temple, but wholly repudiate it, as it seems to be unworthy of their high dignity. I call the charge of the temple, not that which is the duty of overseers, but whatever belongs to the worship of God: but to feed the flock, to discharge the office of pastors, and to administer the sacraments, is to these a sordid employment. Hence the Pope, with all his adherents, can easily bear to be relieved from the charge of the temple; but yet he seeks to rule in a profane and tyrannical manner, and according to his own pleasure. But we here see that the charge of the temple is especially intrusted to the priest, as it was a special honour. We also see on what condition God allowed the priests to continue in their dignity, even on that of walking in his ways.

He afterwards adds, *I will give thee passages* (intercourses) *among those who stand by*,[1] that is, I will cause all the godly to admit and freely to receive thee. The angels who stood there, no doubt, represented the body of the Church;

[1] This is a difficult sentence. *Kimchi*, *Marckius*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, *Scott*, and others, take the meaning given in our version, and regard מהלכים as a noun, signifying places to walk in, walkings. It is nowhere else found except in the singular number, מהלך, a walk, or a journey: Jon. iii. 4; Ezek. xlii. 4: but as a participle, signifying walking, we meet with it in Eccl. iv. 15, and in the singular number in Ps. civ. 3; Prov. vi. 11. *Vatablus*, *Pagninus*, and *Castalio* render it "incessus, vias, aditus," words of similar import with "transitus" of *Calvin* and of *Mede*. The meaning is thus given by *Drusius*, "I will give thee the privilege of walking among these," that is, the angels who stood there. *Jerome's* version is, "Et dabo tibi ambulantes de his qui nunc hic assistant—And I will give thee walkers of those who now stand here." The same is given by *Grotius*, who explains "walkers" in the sense of protectors, and refers to Ps. xci. 11, and Matt. iv. 6. To the same purpose, as to the meaning, is the version of *Henderson*; only he renders מהלכים, guides, conceiving it to be a hiphil participle, "causing to walk," a designation of leaders, guides, or conductors. According to this view, the promise made is, that angels would be the guardians and protectors of Joshua and his associates, and not according to the former view, that Joshua would have a place among angels in heaven, in which sense the *Targum*, as well as the Jewish Rabbins, understand the passage.

Blayney renders "walkers," ministers, being persons ready to go and come when bidden: and by those who stood by, he understands the inferior priests, who are here promised to Joshua as his assistants, and are mentioned in the next verse as his "companions." There is nothing in the verb עמד, or ישב, to prevent this meaning, as they do not *necessarily* denote a position but a presence.

May not "walkers," or those who walk or perambulate, be the same as

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for they are mingled with the faithful whenever they meet together in the name of Christ, as Paul teaches us in 1 Cor. xi. 10. Angels alone then stood by; but it is the same as though God had said, "Thee will all the faithful acknowledge, so that a free passage will be open to thee among them, provided thou walkest in my ways." And he puts *passages* in the plural number, for he speaks of continued homage and regard.

The meaning is, that the priest is ever worthy of regard and honour when he faithfully performs his office and obeys the call of God. We may, on the other hand, conclude that all masked pastors ought justly to be excluded, when they not only are apostates and perfidious against God, but seek also to destroy the Church; yea, when they are also voracious wolves and spiritual tyrants and slaughterers. All those who are such, the angel clearly intimates, are not only unworthy of being received, but ought also to be excluded and exterminated from the Church. We now then perceive what I have stated, that whatever excellency belongs to the pastors of the Church ought not to be separated from the honour due to God; for God does not resign his authority to mortals, nor diminish anything from his own right; but he only constitutes men as his ministers, that he may by them govern his Church alone, and be alone supreme. It hence follows, that they are unworthy of honour who perform not faithfully their office; and when they rob God of what belongs to him, they ought to be deprived of their very name; for it is nothing else but the mask of Satan, by which he seeks to deceive the simple. He afterwards adds—

8. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold,

8. Audi nunc Jehoshua, sacerdos magne, tu et socii tui qui stant (*vel*, habitant) in conspectu tuo; quia viri portenti sunt isti; quia ecce prodire facio servum meum Gramen. (*Ubi verti*, quoniam viri portenti sunt, *potest*

those mentioned in the first vision, chap. i. 10, 11? If so, we may render the sentence thus—

And I will appoint for thee those who walk to and fro
From among those who stand here.

Angels have different offices; and the most probable meaning of the passage is, that it contains the promise of angels as guardians.—*Ed.*

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I will bring forth my servant The BRANCH. *ita resolvi oratio,* quamvis sint viri portenti; *sed de sensu Prophetæ statim dicam.*)

The angel shows here, that what had been hitherto shown to Zechariah was typical; for the reality had not as yet come to light, but would appear in its time. We have said that God's design was to lead the godly to the expectation of Christ; for these beginnings of favour were obscure. It behoved them, therefore, to hope for far more than they saw; and this appears evident from the verse before us, in which the angel says, *hear now.* He makes this preface to gain attention, as though he said, that he was going to speak of something remarkable. Then he adds, *thou and thy associates who stand before thee; I will send my servant the Branch.*

Let us notice this, which is the main part of the verse, *Behold, I send my servant, the Branch.* The God of hosts no doubt refers to the priest, who is eminent beyond the common comprehension of men. He is called a Branch, because he was to come forth as a stem, according to what is said in Isaiah, the eleventh chapter, and in other places. It is then the same as though he had said, "this priesthood is as yet disregarded, nevertheless my servant, the priest, shall come forth like a branch which arises from the earth, and it will grow." The word צמח, *tsamech*, means a shoot. He then compares Christ to a shoot, for he seemed, as we say, to rise up from nothing, because his beginning was contemptible. For what excellency had Christ in the estimation of the world when he was born? how did he commence his kingdom? and how was he initiated into his priesthood? Doubtless, whatever honour and glory the Father had given him was regarded we know with contempt. It is then no wonder that he is on this account called a Branch.

Now the reason for the similitude is apparent enough: and though the angel speaks indefinitely, the person of Christ is no doubt intended. How so? We may judge by the event itself. What priest succeeded Joshua who equalled him in honour, or who in the tenth degree approached him? We know that nearly all were profane and ungodly men; we know that the priesthood became venal among them;

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we know that it was contended for with the most cruel hatred; nay, we know that a priest was slain in the temple itself; ambition was burning so furiously that no success could be gained without shedding innocent blood. After the death of Joshua nothing could have been more base and more disgraceful than the Jewish priesthood. Where then is to be found this *servant* of God, *the Branch?* This principle must also be ever borne in mind, that the reformation of the temple was to be made by Christ: we must, therefore, necessarily come to him, that we may find the servant mentioned here.[1] And why he is called a servant has been stated elsewhere; for he humbled himself that he might be not only the minister of his Father, but also of men. As then Christ condescended to become the servant of men, it is no wonder that he is called the servant of God.

Let us now enquire why the angel bids Joshua and his companions to hear. He indirectly reproves, I doubt not, the common unbelief, for there were very few then who had any notion of a future and spiritual priesthood. Indeed, the people had the promises in their mouths, but nearly all had their thoughts fixed on the earth and the world. This is the reason why the angel directed his words especially to Joshua and his companions: he saw that the ears of others were almost closed; he saw so much indifference in the people, that hardly any one was capable of receiving his doctrine: and thus he intended to obviate a trial which might have weakened the courage of Joshua. For we know how ready we are to faint when the whole world would drive us to apostasy; for when any of us is weak, we wish to be supported by others; and when there is no faith, no religion,

[1] *Grotius* and *Newcome*, (not *Blayney*, as misstated by *Henderson*,) following *Theodoret* and *Kimchi*, strangely consider that Zerubbabel is meant by the "Branch." The *Targum*, *Cyril*, *Drusius*, and almost all modern divines, regard the Messiah as intended. See Is. iv. 2; xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15, 16.

"The same person must needs be intended here as in Jer. xxiii. 5. . . . Besides, it is evident that the *Branch* is promised as one that was to come, and not as one that had already enjoyed his estate, such as it was, for many years past."—*Blayney*.

Christ is thus called, says *Menochius*, "because he came forth as a new shoot from the almost dead root of the Patriarchs."—*Ed.*

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no piety among men, every one is ready to quail. In short, we can hardly believe God, and continue firm in his word, except we have many companions, and a large number in our favour; and when unbelief prevails everywhere our faith vacillates. Hence the angel now addresses Joshua and his companions apart; as though he had said, that there was no reason for them to depend on the multitude, but, on the contrary, to look to God, and by relying on his word to wait patiently for what he promised, though all the rest were to reject his favour: *Thou* then *and thy friends who stand before thee.*

He adds, *for they are men of wonder*, or though they are men of wonder; but the meaning is the same. For God means, that though the whole people rejected what he now declares as to the renewal of the priesthood, it would yet be found true and confirmed in its own time. Some render the words, "men of prodigy," because they were objects of wonder; and they think that the companions of Joshua were signalized by this title or encomium, because their faith was victorious and surmounted all hindrances.[1] But the meaning of the Prophet seems to me to be wholly different: and, I doubt not, but that this passage is the same with another in Isaiah, the eighth chapter, where he says, that the faithful were men of prodigy, or, that they were for a sign or prodigy, because they were objects of hatred, "what do these seek for themselves?" As then all were astonished as at a spectacle new and unwonted, when any one of the faithful met them, the Prophet says, that the true servants of God were then for a sign and prodigy. So here they are

[1] The word מופת, has two meanings—a *miracle*, such as those performed in Egypt, Ex. vii. 9—and a *sign*, such as Isaiah was, ch. xx. 3, and Ezekiel, ch. xii. 6; who performed a particular action which was to be a sign or token of something else. If we render the words here, "the men of miracle," the reference seems to be to their miraculous or extraordinary deliverance from captivity; but if we adopt the version of *Menochius, Marckius, Blayney*, and *Henderson*, "men of sign," or symbolical men, the meaning is, that in their office they represented Christ, that what they did was a sign which foreshowed and prefigured what Christ, the Branch, was to do; and this is the explanation which *Parkhurst* offers.

The reading of *Adam Clarke* is not amiss, "*figurative men*, men whose office and ministry *prefigured* the Lord Jesus Christ."—*Ed.*

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men of prodigy, for we see clearly, that the companions of Joshua were separated from the rest, or the common multitude. Why? not because they were objects of wonder, for that would be frigid, but because they were objects of reproach to all; and they were hardly borne with by the people, who clamoured, "what do these seek for themselves? they seek to be wiser than the Church."

In the same way we find ourselves at this day to be condemned by the Papists. "Oh! these, forsooth, will create a new world, they will create a new law: the rule of our great men will not satisfy these; we have a Church founded for so many ages, antiquity is in our favour. In short these men tear asunder what has been sanctioned from the beginning until now." But in the time of Joshua and in the time of Isaiah, all who simply believed God were regarded as strange men; for the people had become then so unrestrainedly licentious, that to retain the pure worship of God was viewed as a strange thing on account of its novelty.

We now apprehend the meaning of the words, when the angel bids Joshua and his companions to attend, and when he calls them the men of prodigy, and when at last he promises that a priest should arise like a Branch, for God would make Christ to rise up, though hid, not only under the feet, but under the earth itself, like a shoot which comes forth from the root after the tree has been cut down. It follows—

9. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

9. Quia ecce lapis quem posui coram Iehosua, super lapidem unum septem oculi: ecce ego sculpo sculpturam ejus (*lapidis*) dicit Iehova exercituum: et aufero iniquitatem terræ hujus die una.

He more fully sets forth what we have observed in the last verse; but he speaks figuratively. He says that there were seven eyes on the stone which was set before Joshua; and that God would in one day take away the iniquity of the land, so that nothing would prevent it from recovering its ancient glory. This is the import of the whole; but interpreters vary, especially as to the eyes.

Almost all Christians agree as to the stone; for they think

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Christ to be meant; and we know that there are many similar passages, where Christ is called a stone, because the Church is on him founded; "Behold, I lay in Zion a precious stone," says Isaiah in the 28th chapter; and in Psalm cxviii. and in other places there are similar words. I yet think that the Prophet alludes to the temple, which was then begun to be built; but at the same time I take this as admitted, that Christ is called metaphorically a stone, as before he was called a Branch. But we must bear in mind that the external figure of the visible temple is applied to Christ himself. *Behold*, says God, *the stone which I have set* before Joshua has *seven eyes;* and further, *I will engrave it with sculptures*, that it may appear wonderful before the whole world. We now perceive what the subject is, and the mode of speaking here adopted.

As to the subject, the angel says, that the temple which Joshua had begun to build, was a celestial building; for God here declares himself to be its founder and builder,—*The stone*, he says, which *I have set;* and he says this, that Joshua might know that he laboured not in vain in building the temple. For had it been the work of men, it might have fallen, and might have been pulled down a hundred times by the hand of enemies; but God declares that the temple was founded by his own hand. He, at the same time, as I have said, raises up the thoughts of the godly to Christ, which is the substance and reality of the temple. Hence he says, I set a stone before Joshua; that is, "Though Joshua builds, and workmen diligently labour with him, yet I am the chief framer and architect of the temple."

He then says, *on this stone* shall be *seven eyes*. Some apply this to the seven graces of the Spirit: but the definition which they make, who have said, that the grace of the Spirit is sevenfold, is puerile; they know not about what they prattle and vainly talk; for Scripture speaks of many more. They also falsely adduce a passage from the 11th of Isaiah; for they mistake there as to the number: the Latin version has led them astray. Others think that the seven eyes have a reference to the whole world; as though the angel had said, that all will direct their eyes to this stone, according to

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what is said by Christ, that he was raised up on high, that he might draw all men to himself: then seven eyes, that is, the eyes of all men, shall be turned to this stone.[1] Some again apply this to the fulness of grace which has been given to Christ. But I think that the simpler view is, that his glory is set forth, according to what immediately follows,—*I will engrave its engravings.* For it is a vain refinement to say, that God engraved engravings when the side of Christ was pierced, when his hands and his feet were perforated: this is to trifle, and not seriously to explain Scripture. But the Prophet by engraving, means the valuable and extraordinary character of this stone; as though he had said, "It will be a stone remarkable for every excellency; for God will adorn this stone with wonderful engravings; and then it will be a stone having eyes, that is, it will not only turn to itself the eyes of others, but it will illuminate them, and exhibit as it were such brightness as will, by its own reflexion, lead men to behold it."[2] We now understand the full meaning of the Prophet. What remains I cannot finish now.

[1] "Seven eyes looking to it," is the explanation of *Kimchi*. "Seven being taken for an indefinite number." "The eyes of Patriarchs, Prophets, and of all Christians," says *Menochius*. The words may indeed admit of this construction, that is, that "seven" or many "eyes" are fixed on the stone; but the probability is that eyes are ascribed to the stone, which betoken vigilance and care. See Ps. xxxii. 8.—*Ed.*

[2] With this view correspond the remarks of *Marckius*, and also of *Drusius*, *Piscator*, and *Pemble*. The address of the Angel of Jehovah from verse 7 to the end, seems to consist of two parts; the first is spoken to Joshua and his associates, to the middle of verse 8,—and the second, to the Prophet, beginning with the words, "Verily men of sign are these," or "they," as though he pointed to Joshua and his companions. Then the "branch" and the "stone," are proofs of the men being symbolical persons. To separate the two, as *Henderson* does, does not appear right. I give the following version of the whole passage:—

7. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
   If in my ways thou wilt walk,
   And if my charge thou wilt keep,
   Then shalt thou also rule my house,
   And keep also my courts,
   And I will give to thee perambulators
   From among those who stand here:
8. Hear *this* now, Joshua, the high priest,
   Thou and thy associates.
   Verily men of sign *are* these;
   For behold, I will bring my servant, the Branch;

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as by nature we do not willingly submit to the reproach and contempt of the world,—O grant, that with our hearts lifted up to heaven, we may become indifferent to all reproaches, and that our faith may not succumb nor vacillate, though profane men may ridicule us while serving thee under the cross: but may we patiently wait, until Christ shall at length appear in the splendour of his priesthood and kingdom; and may we, in the meantime, contemplate the excellency with which thou hast adorned thy Church, and be thus encouraged to connect ourselves with those few and despised men, who faithfully and sincerely follow thy word, and disregard the arrogance of the whole world, and never doubt, but that if we remain grounded in the pure doctrine of the gospel, thou wilt raise us up to heaven, yea, and above all heavens, where we shall enjoy that blessedness which thine only-begotten Son has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-first.

We have to consider the last words of the ninth verse, in which God promises to *remove the iniquity of the land in one day.* Some refinedly take the one day for the one sacrifice, by which Christ once for all expiated for ever for the sins of the world; but the Prophet in my view speaks in a simpler manner; for he mentions one day for suddenly or quickly. I indeed allow that expiation was to be sought through the

9. For behold the stone, which I have set before Joshua,
On one stone seven eyes;
Behold, I engrave its engraving,
And will remove the iniquity of that land in one day:
In that day saith Jehovah of hosts,
10. Ye shall invite every one his neighbour,
Under the vine and under the fig-tree.

The "Branch" and the "Stone," as designative of the Messiah, were symbols well known to the Jews, as they had been used by former Prophets. *Vitringa*, *Blayney*, and others have rendered "eyes" fountains, and the following line thus, "Behold I open its opening," that is, the orifice through which the fountains were to flow; they conceived the allusion to be to the rock smitten by Moses in the wilderness. The main objection to this, as observed by *Marckius* and *Henderson*, is, that the word rendered "eyes" is masculine, and means "fountains" only when in the feminine gender.—*Ed.*

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one sacrifice of Christ; but the Prophet intimates, that God would be so propitious to the Jews, as to deliver them from all the wrongs and molestations of their enemies. He then assigns a reason why he purposed to deal so bountifully with his people, even because he would not impute their sins. And we know this to be the fountain of all the blessings which flow from God to us, that is, when he forgives us and blots out our sins.

We now then apprehend the Prophet's meaning: I will take away the iniquity of the land in one day, that is, "Though hitherto I have in various ways punished this people, I shall of a sudden be pacified towards them, so that no iniquity shall come to an account before me, or prevent me from favouring this people." It now follows in the Prophet—

10. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.

10. In illo die, dicit Iehova exercituum, vocabitis quisque proximum suum sub vite et sub ficu.

We see from this verse that a particular time is signified by one day; for the Prophet wished to inspire the Jews with confidence, lest they should think that their misery would continue, because God had hitherto treated them with rigour and severity. Here then is shown to them a sudden change. He therefore adds, *In that day, ye shall call every one his neighbour under his vine and under his fig-tree;* that is, "Ye shall dwell secure, beyond the reach of fear or of danger; for no one will be incensed against you." This kind of expression signifies a safe and quiet state, that is, when it is said, that neighbours meet together under the vine and under the fig-tree. For they who fear, either remain inclosed in cities, or seek, when in the country, some fortified place and difficult of access, or watch their own doors that they may not be exposed to injuries; but they who joyfully meet together under the vine or under the fig-tree, show that they are free from every anxiety and fear.

The sum of the whole then is,—that when God shall openly make himself the guardian of his Church, the faith-

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ful shall be relieved from every fear, and shall cheerfully enjoy their freedom, so that they shall venture to have their repast under the vine and under the fig-tree, that is, in the open air and on the public road, as there will be none to terrify them. But as this promise is to be extended to the whole kingdom of Christ, what is said ought to be applied to that spiritual peace which we enjoy, when we are fully persuaded that God is reconciled to us; for then also we become reconciled among ourselves, so that we no longer seek to injure one another, according to what we have observed in Micah, (chap. iv. 4,) and according to what Isaiah says in the second chapter. Let us now proceed—

CHAPTER IV.

1. And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

2. And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all *of* gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which *are* upon the top thereof:

3. And two olive-trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof.

4. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord?

5. Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

6. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

1. Et reversus est angelus, qui loquebatur mecum, et excitavit me, quasi virum qui excitatur (*vel*, evigilat) a somno suo.

2. Et dixit ad me, Quid tu vides? et dixi, Video, et ecce candelabrum ex auro totum (*hoc est*, ex solido auro,) et pelvis super caput ejus; et septem lucernæ super ipsum; septem et septem infusoria lucernis, quæ sunt super caput ejus;

3. Et duæ oleæ super ipsum, una a dextera pelvis, et una ad sinistram ejus.

4. Et respondi et dixi angelo, qui loquebatur mecum, dicendo, Quid ista, Domine mi?

5. Et respondit angelus, qui loquebatur mecum, et dixit mihi, Annon cognoscis quid sint hæc? Et dixi, Non, Domine mi.

6. Et respondit et dixit mihi dicendo, Hic sermo Iehovæ ad Zerubbabel, dicendo, Non in exercitu, et non in fortitudine, sed in Spiritu meo, dicit Iehova exercituum.

Another vision is narrated here,—that a candlestick was shown to the Prophet, on which there were seven lights. He says that the candlestick was formed *all of gold:* and

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he says that to the seven lamps there were as many cruses, (*infusoria*—pourers,) or, as some think, there were seven cruses to each lamp: but the former view is what I mostly approve, that is, that every lamp had its own cruse. He further says, that there were two olive-trees, one on the right, the other on the left hand, so that there was no deficiency of oil, as the olive-trees were full of fruit. Since then there was a great abundance of berries, the oil would not fail; and the lamps were continually burning. This is the vision, and the explanation is immediately added, for God declares that his Spirit was sufficient to preserve the Church without any earthly helps, that is, that his grace would always shine bright, and could never be extinguished.

There is, moreover, no doubt but that God set forth to Zechariah a figure and an image suitable to the capacities of the people. The candlestick in the temple, we know, was made of gold; we know also, that seven lamps were placed in the candlestick, for it had six branches; and then there was the trunk of the candlestick. As then the seven lamps shone always in the temple on the golden candlestick, it was the Lord's design here to show that this ceremonial symbol was not superfluous or insignificant; for his purpose was really to fulfil what he exhibited by the candlestick: and such analogy is to be seen in many other instances. For it was not the Lord's purpose simply to promise what was necessary to be known; but he also designed to add at the same time a confirmation by ceremonial types, that the Jews might know that their labour was not in vain when they lighted the lamps in the temple; for it was not a vain or a deceptive spectacle, but a real symbol of his favour, which was at length to be exhibited towards them. But we may more fully learn the design of the whole, by considering the words, and each part in order.

He says that the Angel *returned;* by which we understand that God, without any request or entreaty on the part of the Prophet, confirmed by a new prophecy what we have already observed; for the Prophet confesses that he was as it were overcome with astonishment, so that it was necessary to awake him as it were from sleep. The Prophet was not

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therefore able to ask any thing of God when under the influence of amazement; but God of his own free will came to his aid, and anticipated his request. We hence see that the faithful were not in one way only taught to entertain confidence as to the restoration of the Church; but as there was need of no common confirmation, many visions were given; and it must at the same time be added, that though no one interposed, yet God was of his own self solicitous about his Church, and omitted nothing that was necessary or useful to support the faith of his people. And farther, as the Prophet says that he was awakened by the Angel, let us learn, that except God awakens us by his Spirit, torpor will so prevail over us, that we cannot raise our minds above. Since God then sees that we are so much tied down to the earth, he rouses us as it were from our lethargy. For if the Prophet had need of such help, how much more have we, who are far below him in faith? Nay, if he was earthly, are we not altogether earth and ashes? It must yet be observed, that the Prophet was not so overwhelmed with drowsiness as with astonishment; so that he was hardly himself, as it is the case with men in an ecstasy.

The Prophet was also reminded to be attentive to the vision—*What seest thou?* Then there was presented to him a sight which we have described; but the Prophet by seeing could have seen nothing, had he not been instructed by the Angel. We must also observe, that this tardiness of the Prophet is useful to us; for we hence more surely conclude, that nothing was represented without a design; but that the whole was introduced for his benefit, though he overlooked, as with closed eyes, what God showed to him by the Angel. We then conclude that there was nothing done by chance, but that the Prophet was really under a divine guidance, so that he might learn what he was afterwards faithfully to deliver to others.

The vision is then narrated—that a candlestick of God was shown to him. The substance of the candlestick was intended to set forth a mystery. It is indeed true that gold is corruptible; but as we cannot otherwise understand what exceeds the things of the world, the Lord, under the

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figure of gold, and silver, and precious stones, sets forth those things which are celestial, and which surpass in value the earth and the world. It was for this purpose that God commanded a candlestick to be made of gold for him, not that he needed earthly wealth or riches, or was pleased with them as men are, whose eyes are captivated by the sight of gold and silver. We indeed know that all these things are counted as nothing before God; but regard was had in these symbols to this—that they might know that something sublime and exalted was to be understood whenever they looked on the golden candlestick. Hence by the gold the Prophet must have learnt, that what was here set forth was not worthless or mean, but unusual and of great importance.

He afterwards says that there was a *vessel*, or some render it a pot; but it was a round vessel, and it was *on the top of the candlestick;* for the lamps burned on the very summit of the candlestick. Now there was a pot or bowl; and here there was a little difference between the candlestick of the temple and that of which the Prophet speaks now; for in the candlestick of the temple there were many pots or bowls, but here the Prophet says that there was but one; and also that there were seven pourers or pourings; for by this term we may understand the very act of pouring, as well as the instruments themselves. But it is better to refer this to the pourers, which distilled the oil continually, that the wick might not become dry, but gather always new strength. He says that there were seven pourers to the lamps on the top;[1] and also that there were *two olive-trees*, which supplied new abundance, so that the oil was always flowing.

We must now then enquire the meaning of the vision. Many understand by the candlestick the Church; and this may be allowed. At the same time I think that God here

[1] Literally it is, "seven and seven pourers," or pipes, or tubes "to the lamps" or lights. Some, as *Henderson*, regard the first "seven" as an interpolation, and it is not in the *Sept.* nor *Vulg.* Others, as *Newcome*, receive it, and place it before lamps—"to the seven lamps." If "seven and seven" be taken as a form to express fourteen, then there were two pipes to convey the oil from the bowl to each lamp, answerable to the two olive-trees which supplied the oil; and it may be that this was expressed in order to intimate with more distinctness that the oil proceeded equally to each lamp from the two olive-trees.—*Ed.*

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simply testified to the Jews, that in having commanded them to set up a candlestick, he did not appoint an empty, or a deceptive, but a real symbol. God no doubt represented by the lamps the graces, or the various gifts of his Spirit; yet the idea of a sevenfold grace is a mere fancy; for God did not intend to confine to that number the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the variety of which is manifold, even almost infinite. Hence the number seven designates perfection, according to the common usage of Scripture. God then intended by placing the candlestick in the midst of the temple, to show that the grace of his Spirit always shines in his Church, not of one kind only, but so that there was nothing wanting as to its perfection. Some think that teachers are represented by the lamps; but as I have already said, it is better to take a simple view of the meaning than refinedly to philosophize on the subject. There is indeed no doubt but that God pours forth his graces to illuminate his Church by his ministers; this we find by experience; but what I have stated is sufficient—that God never forsakes his Church, but illuminates it with the gifts of his Spirit; while yet the variety of these gifts is set forth by the seven lamps. This is one thing.

It afterwards follows, that the Prophet enquired of the Angel, *What does this mean?* We hence learn again, that the Prophet was instructed by degrees, in order that the vision might be more regarded by us; for if the Prophet had immediately obtained the knowledge of what was meant, the narrative might be read by us with no attention; we might at least be less attentive, and some might probably think that it was an uncertain vision. But as the Prophet himself attentively considered what was divinely revealed to him, and yet failed to understand what God meant, we are hereby reminded that we ought not to be indifferent as to what is here related; for without a serious and diligent application of the mind, we shall not understand this prophecy, as we are not certainly more clear-sighted than the Prophet, who had need of a guide and teacher. There is also set before us an example to be imitated, so that we may not despair when the prophecies seem obscure to us; for when the Prophet asked, the Angel immediately helped his

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ignorance. There is therefore no doubt but that the Lord will supply us also with understanding, when we confess that his mysteries are hid from us, and when conscious of our want of knowledge, we flee to him, and implore him not to speak in vain to us, but to grant to us the knowledge of his truth. The angel's question to the Prophet, whether he understood or not, is not to be taken as a reproof of his dulness, but as a warning, by which he meant to rouse the minds of all to consider the mystery. He then asked, *Art thou ignorant of what this means*, in order to elicit from the Prophet a confession of his ignorance. Now if the Prophet, when elevated by God's Spirit above the world, could not immediately know the purpose of the vision, what can we do who creep on the earth, except the Lord supplies us with understanding? In short, Zechariah again recommends to us the excellency of this prophecy, that we may more attentively consider what God here declares.

He calls the angel his *Lord*, according to the custom of the Jews; for they were wont thus to address those who were eminent in power, or in anything superior. He did not call him Lord with the intention of transferring to him the glory of God; but he thus addressed him only for the sake of honour. And here again we are reminded, that if we desire to become proficient in the mysteries of God, we must not arrogate any thing to ourselves; for here the Prophet honestly confesses his own want of knowledge. And let us not at this day be ashamed to lie down at God's feet, that he may teach us as little children; for whosoever desires to be God's disciple must necessarily be conscious of his own folly, that is, he must come free from a conceit of his own acumen and wisdom, and be willing to be taught by God.

Now follows the explanation: the angel gives this answer —*This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying*, &c. Here the angel bears witness to what I have shortly referred to —that the power of God alone is sufficient to preserve the Church, and there is no need of other helps. For he sets the Spirit of God in opposition to all earthly aids; and thus he proves that God borrows no help for the preservation of

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his Church, because he abounds in all blessings to enrich it. Farther, by the word Spirit we know is meant his power, as though he had said, "God designs to ascribe to himself alone the safety of his Church; and though the Church may need many things, there is no reason why it should turn its eyes here and there, or seek this or that help from men; for all abundance of blessings may be supplied by God alone." And *host* and *might*,[1] being a part for the whole, are to be taken for all helps which are exclusive of God's grace. It is indeed certain that God acts not always immediately or by himself, for he employs various means, and makes use in his service of the ministrations of men; but his design is only to teach us that we are very foolish, when we look around us here and there, or vacillate, or when, in a word, various hopes, and various fears, and various anxieties affect us; for we ought to be so dependent on God alone, as to be fully persuaded that his grace is sufficient for us, though it may not appear; nay, we ought fully to confide in God alone, though poverty and want may surround us on every side. This is the purport of the whole.

But God intended also to show that his Church is built up and preserved, not by human and common means, but by means extraordinary and beyond all our hopes and all our thoughts. It is indeed true, as I have just said, that God does not reject the labours of men in building up and in defending his Church; but yet he seems as though he were not in earnest when he acts by men; for by his own wonderful power he surpasses what can be conceived by human thought. To be reminded of this was then exceedingly necessary, when the Church of God was despised, and when the unbelieving haughtily ridiculed the miserable Jews, whom they saw to be few in number and destitute of all

[1] Οὐκ ἐν δυνάμει μεγάλῃ οὐδὲ ἐν ἰσχύι, *Sept.*; "non in exercitu nec in robore," *Jerome*; "non virtute neque vi," *Jun.* et *Trem.* *Newcome* and *Henderson* adopt our version, "not by might nor by power." The first word, חיל seems to mean combined force, either of wealth or of armies; and the second, כח, is the strength or vigour of men—courage or valour. It was not by the united power of the world, nor by individual strength or courage, that the work was to be effected—"not by power nor by strength."—*Ed.*

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earthly aids. As then there was nothing splendid or worthy of admiration among the Jews, it was needful that what we find here should have been declared to them—even that his own power was enough for God, when no aid came from any other quarter. The same also was the design of what we have noticed respecting the seven pourers and the olive-trees; for if God had need of earthly helps, servants must have been at hand to pour forth the oil; but there were seven pourers to supply the oil continually. Wherefrom? even from the olive-trees. As then the trees were fruitful, and God drew from them the oil by his hidden power, that the lamps might never be dry, we hence clearly learn, that what was exhibited is that which the angel now declares, namely, that the Church was, without a host and without might, furnished with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that in these there was a sufficient defence for its preservation, in order that it might retain its perfect state and continue in vigour and safety.

When therefore we now see things in a despairing condition, let this vision come to our minds—that God is sufficiently able by his own power to help us, when there is no aid from any other; for his Spirit will be to us for lamps, for pourers, and for olive-trees, so that experience will at length show that we have been preserved in a wonderful manner by his hand alone.

We now then understand the design of the Prophet, and the reason why this vision was shown to him—that the faithful might be fully induced to entertain a firm hope as to that perfect condition of the Church which had been promised; for no judgment was to be formed of it according to earthly means or helps, inasmuch as God had his own power and had no need of deriving any assistance from others. And Zechariah says also, that this *word* was *to Zerubbabel*, even that he might take courage and proceed with more alacrity in the work of building the temple and the city. For Zerubbabel, we know, was the leader of the people, and the Jews returned to their country under his guidance; and in the work of building the city his opinion was regarded by all, as peculiar honour belonged to him on account of his

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royal descent. At the same time God addressed in his person the whole people: it was the same as though the angel had said, "This word is to the Church." The head is here mentioned for the whole body, a part being specified for the whole.

Now as Zerubbabel was only a type of Christ, we must understand that this word is addressed to Christ and to all his members.

Thus we must remember that all our confidence ought to be placed on the favour of God alone; for were it to depend on human aids, there would be nothing certain or sure. For God, as I have said, withdraws from us whatever may add courage according to the judgment of the flesh, in order that he may invite or rather draw us to himself. Whenever, then, earthly aids fail us, let us learn to recumb on God alone, for it is not *by a host or by might* that God raises up his Church, and preserves it in its proper state; but this he does by his Spirit, that is, by his own intrinsic and wonderful power, which he does not blend with human aids; and his object is to draw us away from the world, and to hold us wholly dependent on himself. This is the reason why he says that the word was addressed to Zerubbabel. The rest I shall consider to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou shinest on us by thy word, and showest to us the way of salvation, we may with open eyes look on that light; and as we are blind also at mid-day, open thou our eyes, and may the inward light of thy Spirit lead us to the light of thy word, that we may not doubt but that thou alone art sufficient to supply us with all those things which are necessary for the enjoyment of celestial life, that by thus distilling on us frequently and continually thou mayest refresh us, so that the light of faith, which has been once kindled in our hearts by thy grace, may never be extinguished, until at length we shall attain to that fulness which has been laid up for us in heaven: and may we thus now in part be satisfied with the measure of knowledge which thou hast given us, until we shall at length see thee face to face, that being thus transformed to thine image, we may enjoy the fulness of that glory into which Christ our Lord has been received.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Forty-second.

7. Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace, unto it.

7. Quis tu mons magne coram Zerubbabel? in planitiem; et educat lapidem capitis ejus, clamores, gratia, gratia ei.

Here the angel pursues the same subject which we have been already explaining—that though the beginning was small and seemed hardly of any consequence and importance, yet God would act in a wonderful manner as to the building of the temple. But as this was not only arduous and difficult, but also in various ways impeded, the angel now says, that there would be no hinderance which God would not surmount or constrain to give way. He compares to a mountain either the Persian monarchy or all the hosts of enemies, which had then suddenly arisen in various parts, so that the Jews thought that their return was without advantage, and that they were deceived, as the event did not answer to their wishes and hopes.

We now then perceive the design of the Holy Spirit: as Satan attempted by various artifices to prevent the building of the temple, the angel declares here that no obstacle would be so great as to hinder the progress of the work, for God could suddenly reduce to a plain the highest mountains. *What art thou, great mountain?* The expression has more force than if the angel had simply said, that all the attempts of enemies would avail nothing; for he triumphs over the pride and presumption of those who then thought that they were superior to the Jews: "Ye are," he says, "like a great mountain; your bulk is indeed terrible, and sufficient at the first view not only to weaken, but also to break down the spirits; but ye are nothing in all your altitude."

But the text may be read in two ways, "What art thou, great mountain? A plain before Zerubbabel;" or, "What art thou, great mountain before Zerubbabel? A plain." The latter rendering is the best, and it is also what has been universally received. And he says that this mountain was

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before Zerubbabel, that is, in his presence, for it stood in opposition to him.

Now this doctrine may be fitly applied to our age: for we see how Satan raises up great forces, we see how the whole world conspires against the Church, to prevent the increase or the progress of the kingdom of Christ. When we consider how great are the difficulties which meet us, we are ready to faint and to become wholly dejected. Let us then remember that it is no new thing for enemies to surpass great mountains in elevation; but that the Lord can at length reduce them to a plain. This, then, our shield can cast down and lay prostrate whatever greatness the devil may set up to terrify us: for as the Lord then reduced a great mountain to a plain, when Zerubbabel was able to do nothing, so at this day, however boldly may multiplied adversaries resist Christ in the work of building a spiritual temple to God the Father, yet all their efforts will be in vain.

He afterwards adds, *He will bring forth the stone of its top.* The relative is of the feminine gender, and must therefore be understood of the building. Zerubbabel shall then bring forth the stone, which was to be on the top of the temple. By the stone of the top, I understand the highest, which was to be placed on the very summit. The foundations of the temple had been already laid; the building was mean and almost contemptible: it could not however be advanced, since many enemies united to disturb the work, or at least to delay it. Nevertheless the angel promises what he afterwards explains more fully—that the temple would come to its completion, for Zerubbabel was to bring forth and raise on high the stone of the top, which was to be on the very summit of the temple.[1] And then he subjoins, *shoutings*,

[1] The *Targum* seems here to have given a false view of this stone, regarding it as the chief corner-stone of the foundation; and this view has been adopted by *Jerome*, *Cyril*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, and *Henderson*. But the context is wholly opposed to it. The ninth verse is decisive on the subject, as noticed by *Marckius*. This stone Zerubbabel was to bring forth; he had already laid the foundation-stone. It is considered as "the topmost stone" by *Theodoret*, *Cocceius*, *Pemble*, and *Newcome*. See Ps. cxviii. 22. The last renders the distich thus,

And he shall bring forth the head-stone,
With shoutings, *crying*, Favour, favour, unto it.

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Grace, grace, to it; that is, God will grant a happy success to this stone or to the temple. The relative here again is feminine; it cannot then be applied to Zerubbabel, but to the temple or to the stone: it is however more probable that the angel speaks of the temple. And he says that there would be shoutings; for it was necessary to encourage the confidence of the faithful and to excite them to prayer, that they might seek, by constant entreaties, a happy and prosperous issue to the building of the temple. The angel, then, bids all the godly with one voice to pray for the temple; but as all prosperous events depend on the good pleasure of God, he uses the word חן, *chen*, grace, which he repeats, that he might more fully encourage the faithful to perseverance, and also that he might kindle their desire and zeal.

We now then see what this verse on the whole contains: first, the angel shows that however impetuously the ungodly might rage against the temple, yet their attempts would be frustrated, and that though they thought themselves to be like great mountains, it was yet in the power and will of God to reduce them to a plain, that is, suddenly to lay them prostrate. This is one thing. Then secondly, he adds, that a happy success would attend the building of the temple; for Zerubbabel would bring forth the top-stone, the highest. And lastly, he subjoins, that the faithful ought unanimously to pray, and so to persevere with the greatest ardour and zeal, that God might bless the temple, and cause the building of it to be completed. It now follows—

8. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

9. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

8. Et factus est sermo Iehovæ ad me dicendo,

9. Manus Zerubbabel fundarunt domum hanc, et manus ejus perficient eam; et cognosces quia Iehova exercituum miserit me ad vos.

He confirms in this passage what I lately stated—That

The last line is rendered by *Marckius*—

Acclamations of favour,—of favour (*shall be*) to it.

"Favour," or grace, here seems to be a metonymy, prosperity or success being the effect of God's favour: and this is the view given by *Calvin*.—*Ed.*

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there was no reason for the faithful to entertain doubts or to feel anxious, because they saw that the beginning of the building was mean and despised by the world; for the Lord would at length show that it was built by his sanction and command, and that it would succeed far better than all of them had thought.

But he says that the *word of Jehovah came* to him;[1] and yet at the end of the next verse he shows that this address came from the mouth of the angel. But it is a well-known and a common mode of speaking, that God himself is said to speak, when he employs either angels or men as his agents; for the person of the messenger lessens in no degree the reverence due to the word: the majesty, then, of God ought to remain inviolable in his word, whether brought to us by men or by angels. Now the Prophet felt assured that nothing was adduced by the angel, but what he conveyed as the minister of God.

The sum of the whole is, that the temple, though some interruptions happened, was yet so begun that its completion was at length to be expected; as God had made use of the labours of Zerubbabel, so he would not forsake the work of his hands. Since, then, God was the chief founder of the building, it could not be but that the temple would at length be completed.

This is what the angel had in view in these words, *The hands of Zerubbabel have founded this house.* Of the foundation there was indeed no doubt; but many believed that the building would ever remain unfinished, for Satan had already by means of the most powerful enemies impeded its progress. As then despair had laid hold on the minds of almost all, the angel declares that Zerubbabel would gain his object in finishing the temple which he had begun.

He afterwards adds, *Thou shalt know that God has sent me to you.* Of this knowledge we have spoken elsewhere. The meaning is, that the event would be a sure and suitable

[1] That is, what follows was especially addressed to the Prophet. The former part, beginning at the sixth verse, was a communication to Zerubbabel, and may be considered as parenthetic; the angel now proceeds to give an answer to the Prophet.—*Ed.*

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proof, that nothing had been rashly undertaken by them, but that the temple was built by God's command, for his power would be evident in its completion. And he addresses the Prophet, who though he was fully persuaded of the event and of the fulfilment of this prophecy, yet learnt by what took place that the angel who gave the promise was sent from above. We have said elsewhere that there are two kinds of knowledge; one is of faith, which we derive from the word, though the thing itself does not appear; the other is of experience, when God adds accomplishment to the promise, and proves that he had not spoken in vain: and this is the knowledge which the angel means when he says, *Thou shalt know* that I have been sent from above to you.

Now if this be applied to Christ, it may, as I have said, be justly done; for it is certain that angels were then sent in such a manner that Christ was the chief. Since, then, nothing was undertaken as to the building of the temple without Christ being the leader, he rightly says here that he was sent by the Father. It afterwards follows—

10. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

10. Quia quis contempsit diem parvitatum (parvorum; *sed hic accipitur pro parvitate?*) gaudabunt et videbunt (*ad verbum*) lapidem stanneum in manu Zerubbabel (*sed ita resolvi debet oratio*, certè gaudabunt ubi viderint lapidem in manu Zerubbabel:) septem hi, oculi Iehovæ sunt, circumeuntes (*vel*, qui discurrunt) per totam terram.

Here the angel reproves the sloth and fear of the people, for the greater part were very faint-hearted; and he also blames the Jews, because they formed a judgment of God's work at the first view, *Who is he*, he says, *that has despised the day of paucities?* He does not ask who it was, as though he spoke only of one, or as though they were few in number or insignificant: but he addresses the whole people, who were chargeable with entertaining this wrong feeling; for all were cast down in their minds, because they thought that the work begun would be a sport to the ungodly, and would come to nothing, according to what we read in Nehemiah, (iii. 12,) that the old men wept, so that nearly all threw

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down their tools, and left off the building of the temple. We hence see that not a few despised the small beginnings, and that the minds of all the people were dejected, for they thought that they laboured in vain while building the temple, which made no approach to the glory and splendour of the former temple: "What are we doing here? we seek to build a temple for God; but what is it? does it correspond to the temple of Solomon? No, not in the tenth degree; yet God has promised that this temple would be most glorious." While then they were considering these things, they thought either that the time was not come, or that they toiled in vain, because God would not dwell in a tent so mean. This is the reason why the Prophet now says, *Who is he that has despised the day of paucities?*[1]

God then sets himself in opposition to an ungrateful and ill-disposed people, and shows that they all acted very foolishly, because they cast and fixed their eyes only on the beginning of things, as though God would not surpass by his power what human minds could conceive. As then God purposed in a wonderful manner to build the temple, the angel reproves here the clamours of the people.

He then adds, *They shall rejoice when they shall see the workman's plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.*[2] Though he had adopted a severe and sharp reproof, he yet mitigates here its severity, and promises to the Jews that however unworthy they were of such kindness from God, they would yet see what they had by no means expected, even Zerubbabel furnished with everything necessary for the completion of the temple. Hence *they shall see Zerubbabel with his tin-stone;*[3]

[1] "The day of small beginnings," says *Drusius*. It is explained by *Blayney* with reference to the time when the resources of the nation appeared in the eyes of many inadequate to the building of the temple.—*Ed.*

[2] Literally it is, "But they shall rejoice and see the tin-ore (or plummet) in the hand of Zerubbabel." The regular order would have been "see" and "rejoice;" but it is according to the manner of statement often observed in the Prophets: they frequently mention first the effect, and then the cause.—*Ed.*

[3] "It seems strictly to mean a piece of *tin-ore*, (compare Deut. viii. 9,) which is heavier than that of any other metal, and so more proper for a *plummet*."—*Parkhurst*.

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that is, with his plummet. As builders in our day use a plumb-line, so he calls that in the hand of Zerubbabel a tin-stone, which he had when prepared to complete the temple.

This doctrine may be also applied to us: for God, to exhibit the more his power, begins with small things in building his spiritual temple; nothing grand is seen, which attracts the eyes and thoughts of men, but everything is almost contemptible. God indeed could put forth immediately his power, and thus rouse the attention of all men and fill them with wonder; he could indeed do so; but as I have already said, his purpose is to increase, by doing wonders, the brightness of his power; which he does, when from a small beginning he brings forth what no one would have thought; and besides, his purpose is to prove the faith of his people; for it behoves us ever to hope beyond hope. Now when the beginning promises something great and sublime, there is no proof and no trial of faith: but when we hope for what does not appear, we give due honour to God, for we depend only on his power and not on the proximate means. Thus we see that Christ is compared to a shoot, which arises from the stem of Jesse. (Is. xi. 1.) God might have arranged that Christ should have been born when the house of David was in its splendour, and when the kingdom was in a flourishing state: yet his will was that he should come forth from the stem of Jesse, when the royal name was almost cut off. Again, he might have brought forth Christ as a full-grown tree; but he was born as an insignificant shoot. So also he is compared by Daniel to a rough and unpolished stone cut off from a mountain. (Dan. ii. 45.) The same thing has also been accomplished in our age, and continues still at this day to be accomplished. If we consider what is and has been the beginning of the growing gospel, we shall find nothing illustrious according to the perceptions of the flesh; and on this account the adversaries confidently despise us; they regard us as the off-scourings of men, and hope to be able to cast us down and scatter us by a single breath.

There are many at this day who despise the day of paucity,

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who grow faint in their minds, or even deride our efforts, as though our labour were ridiculous, when they see us sedulously engaged in promoting the truth of the gospel; and we ourselves are also touched with this feeling: there is no one who becomes not sometimes frigid, when he sees the beginning of the Church so mean before the world, and so destitute of any dignity. We hence learn how useful it is for us at this day to be reminded, that we shall at length see what we can by no means conjecture or hope for according to present appearances; for though the Lord begins with little things, and as it were in weakness, yet the plummet will at length be seen in the hand of the Architect for the purpose of completing the work. There is at this day no Zerubbabel in the world, to whom the office of building the temple has been committed; but we know that Christ is the chief builder, and that ministers are workmen who labour under him. However then may Satan blind the unbelieving with pride and haughtiness, so that they disdain and ridicule the building in which we labour; yet the Lord himself will show that he is the chief builder, and will give to Christ the power to complete the work.

He afterwards adds, *These seven are the eyes of Jehovah, going round through the whole earth.* The angel calls the attention of Zechariah to what we have before observed; for the discourse was respecting the plummet, and Zechariah said, that there were shown to him seven eyes in that stone. The angel explains what those seven eyes meant, even that the Lord by his providence would conduct the work to its completion. But we have said that seven eyes are attributed to God, that we may be assured that nothing is hid from him; for no one among men or angels possesses so great a clear-sightedness but that he is ignorant of some things. Many of God's mysteries, we know, are hid from angels; but when they are sent forth, they receive as much revelation as their office requires. But the angel shows here, that we ought by no means to fear that anything will happen which God has not foreseen; for the *seven eyes*, he says, *go around through the whole earth:* not that God has need of

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seven eyes; but we know what the number seven means in Scripture; it signifies perfection.[1]

The meaning then is—that God would sufficiently provide that nothing should happen that might disturb him, or turn him aside, or delay him in the execution of his work. How so? because there were seven eyes; that is, he by his providence would surmount all difficulties, and his eyes went round through the whole earth, so that the devil could devise nothing behind or before, on the right hand or on the left, above or below, which he could not easily frustrate. We now then perceive the object of the Prophet.

With regard to the words, some render אלה, *ale*, in the neuter gender, "These are seven, they are the eyes of God." But as to the sense, there is no ambiguity: for the angel would have the faithful to recumb on God's providence, in order that they might be secure and fear no danger; as the Lord would remove whatever was contrary to his purpose. It now follows—

11. Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive-trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick, and upon the left *side* thereof?

12. And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be these* two olive-branches, which, through the two golden pipes, empty the golden *oil* out of themselves?

11. Et respondi et dixi ad eum, Quid duæ oleæ istæ ad dextram candelabri et ad sinistram ejus?

12. Et respondi secundò et dixi ad eum, Quid duo alvei (*vel*, cursus, *vertunt alii*, spicas) olearum, quæ sunt inter duas fistulas auri, fundentes a se aurum?

[1] This verse has been variously rendered. *Marckius* and *Henderson* consider the nominative case to "rejoice" to be the "seven eyes," according to the marginal reading of our version; but *Dathius* and *Newcome* agree with *Calvin*, and regard the people who despised the day of small things to be intended. The latter's version is the following,—

10. For who hath despised the day of small things?
They shall rejoice and shall see
The plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.
These seven *are* the eyes of Jehovah:
They run to and fro through the whole earth.

There is so much inversion in our marginal reading that is wholly inconsistent with the general character of the Hebrew language. "These seven," according to *Dathius*, were "the lamps," and not the "eyes" on the stone mentioned in chapter iii. 9, as some think; for the explanation belongs to the present vision, and not the former. Here is the direct answer to the question asked in verse 4. The two last lines are literally as follows,—

These seven, the eyes of Jehovah *are* they,
Which run to and fro through the whole earth.—*Ed.*

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13. And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be?* And I said, No, my lord.
14. Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

13. Et dixit mihi dicendo, Annon cognoscis quid hæc sunt? Et dixi, Non, Domine mi.
14. Et dixit, Hi sunt duo filii olei qui astant apud Dominatorem cunctæ terræ.

The same vision is again related, at least one similar to that which we have just explained; only there is given a fuller explanation, for the Prophet says that he asked the angel what was meant by the two olive-trees which stood, one on the right, the other on the left side of the candlestick, and also by the two pipes of the olive-trees. Some render שִׁבֳּלִים, *shebelim*, ears of corn, thinking that the branches of the olive-trees are compared to ears of corn, because they were full and loaded with berries; but the metaphor seems to me immaterial. The word in Hebrew is indeed ambiguous; but it often means a pipe, or a running or flowing; and this sense best suits this passage; and I wonder that this meaning has been overlooked by all interpreters; for no doubt necessity constrained them to betake themselves to this metaphor, however unnatural it was. But we know that this spectacle was presented to Zechariah in order to show that the olive-tree continually supplied abundance of oil, lest the wick should become dry, and lest the lamps should thus fail. Since then on every side there were pourers or pipes, and three tubes received the oil from one olive-tree, and four received it from the other, so that great abundance thus flowed from the two olive-trees, and since there were also seven pipes, we see how suitable it was that they should be between the olive-trees on the right and on the left, and also that their tubes for the oil should be between the pourers and the two pipes. As then the oil ran through the pourers and passed through the two pipes, he asks the angel what these flowings meant? The answer was, *These are the two sons of oil, who stand before the Lord of all the earth;* that is, they are the two fountains which supply oil from God himself, lest the lamps should fail through the want of it.[1] This is the import of the whole.

[1] The second question, which seems to be a modification of the first, has been variously explained. The word שִׁבֳּלִים, except in the feminine

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I have said that there is some difference in the vision, though the angel relates hardly anything new, except respecting the flowings and the tubes; but as a new explanation is given, Zechariah no doubt more fully considered what he had slightly looked on before. The more attentive then to the vision the Prophet became, the more confirmed he was; for God showed to him now what he had not sufficiently observed before, namely, that there were pipes or tubes through which the oil flowed into each of the pourers, and further, that these flowings or a continual running of the oil, was like that of a river, which runs through its own channel. But God intended to instruct his Prophet by degrees, that we may learn at this day to apply our thoughts to the understanding of his doctrine; for the instruction to be derived from it is not of an ordinary kind, as I have already reminded you. Indeed the state of things in our time is nearly the same with that of his time: for Christ now renews by the power of his Spirit that spiritual temple which had been pulled down and wholly demolished; for what has been the dignity of the Church for many ages? Doubtless, it has been for a long time in a dilapidated state; and now when God begins to give some hope of a new building, Satan

gender, has not the meaning attached to it by *Calvin*. It is rendered, "branches," κλάδοι, by the *Septuagint*, *Piscator*, *Newcome*, *Henderson*, and by our own version; "berries," by *Jun.* and *Trem.*, *Drusius* and *Pemble*; and "tubes" by *Grotius*. As it is a repetition of the former question, it is probable that the branches in immediate connexion with the candlestick are intended: the oil proceeded from them by means of tubes or pipes to the bowl or the reservoir at the top of the candlestick, and hence by means of seven tubes or pourers to the seven lamps. The question now is respecting the olive-trees or the branches from which the oil proceeded; and the answer is, that they are "the sons of oil."

What is said of these "sons of oil," that they "stand with (or before) the Lord," can hardly comport with the explanation given by *Calvin*: but it is more suitable to regard them as persons anointed, as rendered in our version, and by *Kimchi*, *Drusius*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. They are considered here to mean Zerubbabel and Joshua; but yet as types of Christ in his twofold character of a king and priest. *Blayney* takes another view; he renders שׁבלים, "orderers," deriving it from the Syriac, in which language the verb signifies to direct, to guide in the way. He conceives them to be two persons, guiding the oil to the channels or tubes which conveyed it to the lamps, and that they were types of Moses and of Christ, the authors of the two dispensations. The preceding view seems the most probable.—*Ed.*

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collects together many forces from all parts to prevent the progress of the work. We are also tender and soft, and even faint-hearted, so that hardly one in a hundred labours so courageously as he ought.

We hence then learn how necessary for us is this doctrine: it was not, therefore, to no purpose that the Prophet did not apprehend at once and in an instant what was presented to him in the vision, but made progress by degrees.

We have also mentioned before, that the desire of improvement observed in Zechariah ought to be noticed. For though we attain not immediately what God teaches, yet the obscurity of a passage ought not to damp our ardour; but we ought rather to imitate the Prophet, who, in things difficult and unknown to him, asked explanations from the angel. Angels are not indeed sent now to us from heaven to answer our questions; but yet no one shall be without benefit who will humbly and with a sincere desire ask of God; for God will either by his ministers so elucidate what seems obscure to us and full of darkness, that we shall know that there is nothing but what is clear in his word; or he will by the Spirit of knowledge and judgment supply what is deficient in the ministrations of men.

And this is also the reason why the angel replies, *Dost thou not know what these mean?* For he does not upbraid Zechariah with ignorance, but rather reminds all the faithful, that they ought to quicken themselves, and to exert all their ardour to learn, lest sloth should close up the way against them. This reply, then, of the angel no doubt belongs to us all, "Dost thou not know what these mean?" We ought to remember that the things we esteem as common far exceed our thoughts. It indeed often happens that one runs over many parts of Scripture, and thinks that he reads nothing but what is clear and well known, while yet experience teaches us that we are inflated with too much self-confidence; for we look down, as it were from on high, on that doctrine which ought, on the contrary, to be reverently adored by us. Then let every one of us, being warned by this sentence of the angel, acknowledge that he as yet cleaves to first principles, or, at least, does not comprehend

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all those things which are necessary to be known; and that therefore progress is to be made to the very end of life: for this is our wisdom, to be learners to the end.

I come now to the answers of the angel, *These are the two sons of oil.* Some understand by the two sons of oil a king and a priest; but this is by no means suitable. There is no doubt but that he calls the perpetual flowings the two sons of oil; as though he had said, that it could not possibly be that the grace of God should ever fail to preserve the Church, as God possesses all abundance, and bids his grace so to flow, as that its abundance should never be diminished.

He therefore says, that they *stand with the Lord of the whole earth:* for עַל, *ol*, sometimes means *with*, and sometimes *concerning;* but I prefer taking its simple meaning; therefore, stand do the sons of oil *with* the Lord. Some render, "nigh the Lord," but improperly; for they pervert the Prophet's meaning, inasmuch as the angel means that these two sons of oil stood with God, as though he had said, that there is such fulness of grace in God, that it could never be exhausted. Though then the oil flowed, it would yet be sufficient to replenish the seven lamps, that is, fully; so that God would raise up his Church, preserve it safe, and lead it to the highest perfection. Hence God is not so poor but that he can continually supply as much grace as will be sufficient for the preservation of his Church. How so? because there are two sons of oil, that is, two continual flowings from him, so that the faithful shall really find, that when they are enriched by the gifts of God, they are in no danger of being in want. This is the meaning.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since Satan at this day sets against us many terrors to cast us down, and we are very weak,—O grant, that with our eyes lifted above we may meditate on that invincible power which thou possessest, and by which thou canst overcome all the hinderances of this world: and then, when nothing in this world but what is contemptible appears to us as capable to confirm and support our faith, may we, by the eye of faith, behold thine hidden power, and never doubt but that thou wilt at length perform what the world at this day thinks to be

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impossible and therefore ridicules; and may we so constantly persevere in this confidence, that every one of us may devote to thee his labour to the end, and never faint in the work of promoting the spiritual building, until at length we ourselves shall be gathered, and others shall be gathered through our labours, to offer to thee not only spiritual sacrifices, such as thou receivest now from us, but also to offer to thee, together with the angels, eternal sacrifice of praise and triumphant thanksgiving, on seeing perfected what at this day is only weakly begun.—Amen.

CHAPTER V.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-third.

1. Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll.

2. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof *is* twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

3. Then said he unto me, This *is* the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off *as* on this side, according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off *as* on that side, according to it.

4. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.

1. Et reversus sum et extuli oculos meos, et aspexi, et ecce volumen volans.

2. Et dixit mihi, Quid tu vides? Et dixi, ego video volumen volans; longitudo ejus viginti in cubito (*hoc est*, ad viginti cubitos,) et latitudo ejus decem in cubito (*hoc est*, ad decem cubitos.)

3. Et dixit mihi, Hæc est maledictio, quæ egreditur super faciem universæ terræ; quia quisquis furatur, ex hac sicut illa punietur; et quisquis pejerat, ex hac sicut illa punietur.

4. Emittam (*vel*, producam) eam, dicit Iehova exercituum; et veniet ad domum furantis, et ad domum jurantis in nomine meo fallaciter; et residebit in medio domus ejus, et consumet eam et ligna ejus et lapides ejus.

The angel shows in this chapter, that whatever evils the Jews had suffered, proceeded from the righteous judgment of God; and then he adds a consolation—that the Lord would at length alleviate or put an end to their evils, when he had removed afar off their iniquity. Interpreters have

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touched neither heaven nor earth in their explanation of this prophecy, for they have not regarded the design of the Holy Spirit. Some think that by the volume are to be understood false and perverted glosses, by which the purity of doctrine had been vitiated; but this view can by no means be received. There is no doubt but that God intended to show to Zechariah, that the Jews were justly punished, because the whole land was full of thefts and perjuries. As then religion had been despised, as well as equity and justice, he shows that it was no wonder that a curse had prevailed through the whole land, the Jews having by their impiety and other sins extremely provoked the wrath of God. This is the import of the first part. And, then, as this vision was terrible, there is added some alleviation by representing iniquity in a measure, and the mouth of the measure closed, and afterwards carried to the land of Shinar, that is, into Chaldea, that it might not remain in Judea. Thus in the former part the Prophet's design was to humble the Jews, and to encourage them to repent, so that they might own God to have been justly angry; and then he gives them reason to entertain hope, and fully to expect an end to their evils, for the Lord would remove to a distance and transfer their iniquity to Chaldea, so that Judea might be pure and free from every wickedness, both from thefts and acts of injustice, by which it had been previously polluted. But every sentence must be in order explained, that the meaning of the Prophet may be more clearly seen.

He says, that he had *returned;*[1] and by this word this vision is separated from the preceding visions, and those also of which we have hitherto spoken, were not at the same time exhibited to the Prophet, but he saw them at different times. We may hence learn that some time intervened before the Lord presented to him the vision narrated in this chapter. He adds, that he *raised up his eyes and looked;*

[1] Some, such as *Piscator*, *Drusius*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*, think that the verb שוּב is used here adverbally, which is sometimes the case, and render the sentence, "And I lifted up mine eyes again." The *Septuagint*, *Jerome*, and our version, have rendered it, "I turned," that is, from one vision to another, or from one direction to another. "Returned" seems not so suitable.—*Ed.*

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and this is said that we may know that what he narrates was shown to him by the prophetic Spirit. Zechariah very often raised up his eyes though God did not immediately appear to him; but it behoved God's servants, whenever they girded themselves for the purpose of teaching, to withdraw themselves as it were from the society of men, and to rise up above the world. The raising up of the eyes then, mentioned by Zechariah, signified something special, as though he had said, that he was prepared, for the Lord had inwardly roused him. The Prophets also, no doubt, were in this manner by degrees prepared, when the Lord made himself known to them. There was then the raising up of the eyes as a preparation to receive the celestial oracle.

He afterwards adds, that he was *asked by the angel what he saw.* He might indeed have said, that a roll flying in the air appeared to him, but he did not as yet understand what it meant; hence the angel performed the office of an interpreter. But he says, that the roll was *twenty cubits long, and ten broad.* The Rabbins think that the figure of the court of the temple is here represented, for the length of the court was twenty cubits and its breadth was ten; and hence they suppose, that the roll had come forth from the temple, that there might be fuller reason to believe that God had sent forth the roll. And this allusion, though not sufficiently grounded, is yet more probable than the allegory of the puerile *Jerome,* who thinks that this ought to be applied to Christ, because he began to preach the gospel in his thirtieth year. Thus he meant to apply this number to the age of Christ, when he commenced his office as a teacher. But this is extreme trifling. I do not feel anxious to know why the length or the breadth is mentioned; for it seems not to be much connected with the main subject. But if it be proper to follow a probable conjecture, what I have already referred to is more admissible—that the length and breadth of the roll are stated, that the Jews might fully understand that nothing was set before them but what God himself sanctioned, as they clearly perceived a figure of the court of the temple.

The angel then says, that it was *the curse* which *went*

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forth[1] *over the face of the whole land.* We must remember what I have just said, that God's judgment is here set forth before the Jews, that they might know how justly both their fathers and themselves have been with so much severity chastised by God, inasmuch as they had procured for themselves such punishments by their sins. From the saying of the angel, that the roll went *through the whole land*, we learn, that not only a few were guilty, or that some corner of the land only had been polluted, but that the wrath of God raged everywhere, as no part of the land was pure or free from wickedness. As then Judea was full of pollutions, it was no wonder that the Lord poured forth his wrath and overwhelmed, as it were with a deluge, the whole land.

It afterwards follows, *for every thief*, or *every one that steals, shall on this as on that side, be punished,* or receive his own reward; *and every one who swears, shall on this as on that side be punished.* As to the words, interpreters differ with regard to the particles, מזה כמזה, *mese camue:* some take the meaning to be, "by this roll, as it is written;" others, "on this side of the roll, as on the other;" for they think that the roll was written on both sides, and that God denounced punishment on thieves as well as on perjurers. But I rather apply the words to the land, and doubt not but that this is the real meaning of the Prophet. As then there is no respect of persons with God, the Prophet, after having spoken of the whole land, says, that no one who had sinned could anywhere escape unpunished, for God would from one part to the other summon all to judgment without any exception.[2]

[1] "From the temple," says *Jerome;* "from God," says *Drusius.*

On the previous words, "this is the curse," *Henderson* makes the remark, that it is a similar phrase to "this is my body," that is, signifies my body: which is a mode of speaking quite common in Scripture, and it is very strange that any should attach to the phrase any other meaning.—*Ed.*

[2] This is no doubt the best construction. *Newcome* retains our version as to the second phrase, "according to it," but renders the first "hence," instead of "on this side;" so does *Marckius;* but *Henderson* follows it in both instances. To render נקה "punished," is not quite correct, though the general meaning is given. It means to be cleared or swept away, and so *Henderson* correctly renders it, "shall be cleared away." See Is. iii. 26; Jer. xxx. 11; xlvi. 28. There is no necessity whatever for the emendation of *Houbigant,* who thinks that it ought to be נקם; nor for the

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Now the Prophet says, that all perjurers, as well as thieves, shall be punished; and there is nothing strange in this, for God, who has forbidden to steal, has also forbidden to forswear. He is therefore the punisher of all transgressions. Those who think that this roll was disapproved, as though it contained false and degenerate doctrine, bring this reason to prove its injustice, that the thief is as grievously punished as the perjurer: but this is extremely frivolous. For, as I have said already, God shows here that he will be the defender of his law in whatever respect men may have transgressed it. We must therefore remember that saying of James, "he who forbids to commit adultery, forbids also to steal: whosoever then offends in one thing is a transgressor of the whole law:" (James ii. 11:) for we ought not simply to regard what God either commands or forbids, but we ought ever to fix our eyes on his majesty, as there is nothing so minute in the law which all ought not reverently to receive; for the laws themselves are not only to be regarded, but especially the lawgiver. As then the majesty of God is dishonoured, when any one steals, and when any one transgresses in the least point, he clearly shows that the word of God is not much regarded by him. It is hence right that thieves and perjurers should be alike punished: yet the Scripture while it thus speaks, does not teach that sins are equal in enormity, as the Stoics in former times foolishly and falsely taught. But the equality of punishment is not what is here referred to; the angel means only, that neither thieves nor perjurers shall go unpunished, as they have transgressed the law of God.

We must also observe, that the mode of speaking adopted here is that of stating a part for the whole; for under the word theft is comprehended whatever is opposed to the duties of love; so that it is to be referred to the second table of the law. And the Prophet calls all those perjurers who

conjecture of others, that it is put here for נכרת, "to be cut off." Nor is *Blayney's* version to be admitted, "because, on the one hand, every one that stealeth *is* as he that is guiltless," for it is wholly inconsistent with the context. He regards it as a description of the state of things which the curse was to rectify.—*Ed.*

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profane the worship of God; and so perjury includes whatever is contrary to the first table of the law, and tends to pollute the service due to God. The meaning is,—that God, as I have said, will be the punisher of all kinds of wickedness, for he has not in vain given his law. Much deceived then are those who flatter themselves, as though by evasions they can elude the judgment of God, for both thieves and perjurers shall be brought before God's tribunal, so that no one can escape, that is, no wickedness shall remain unpunished; for not in vain has he once declared by his own mouth, that cursed are all who fulfil not whatever has been written. (Deut. xxvii. 26.)

And the same thing the Prophet more clearly expresses in the following verse, where God himself declares what he would do, that he would cause *the curse to go forth over the whole land;* as though he had said, "I will really show, that I have not given the law that it may be despised; for what the law teaches shall be so efficacious, that every one who violates it shall find that he has to do, not with a mortal man, nor with sound of words, but with the heavenly judge; *I will bring forth the curse over the whole land.*"

I have said, that the Prophet was instructed in the import of this vision, that all the Jews might know that it was nothing strange that they had been so severely chastised, inasmuch as they had polluted the whole land by their sins, so that no part of the law was observed by them; for on the one hand they had corrupted the worship of God and departed from true religion; and on the other, they distressed one another by many wrongs, and oppressed them by frauds. As then no equity prevailed among the people, nor any true religion, God shows that he would punish them all, as none were guiltless.

He afterwards adds, *It shall come into the house of the thief, and into the house of him who swears in my name falsely; and there will it reside, and it shall consume the house, both the wood and the stones.* Here the Prophet further stimulates the Jews to repentance, by showing that the curse would so fly as to enter into all their houses; as though he had said, "In vain shall they, who deserve punishment,

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fortify or shut up themselves; for this curse, which I send forth, shall come to each individual, and with him it shall remain." We know that hypocrites so flatter themselves, as though they could escape for the moment while God is angry and displeased; but the Prophet shows here that vain is such a hope, for the curse would overtake all the ungodly, and wholly overthrow them; yea, it would consume their houses, both the wood and the stones. In short, he intimates, that punishment ends not until men are reconciled to God. And by these words he reminds us how terrible it is to fall into the hands of God, for he will punish the ungodly and the wicked until he reduces them to nothing. We now then comprehend the design of the Prophet and the meaning of the words. It now follows—

5. Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what *is* this that goeth forth.

6. And I said, What *is* it? And he said, This *is* an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This *is* their resemblance through all the earth.

7. And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this *is* a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

8. And he said, This *is* Wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

5. Et egressus est angelus, qui loquebatur mecum, et dixit mihi, Tolle nunc oculos tuos, et aspice quidnam sit illud quod egreditur.

6. Et dixi, Quid hoc? et dixit, Hoc modius egrediens (*id est*, hoc quod egreditur est modius, *ad verbum*.) Et dixit, Hic oculus eorum in tota terra.

7. Et ecce massa plana plumbi ferebatur (*vertunt alii*, talentum; *et* כבר *significat talentum, et significat planitiam etiam Hebrais; ideo non dubito, quin Propheta intelligat laminam plumbi, vel massam planam et contusam malleo, ita ut faceret totum operculum*, une planque, *ut dicimus lingua nostra;*) et hoc mulier una habitans in medio modii.

8. Et dixit, Hæc est impietas, et projecit eam in medium modii, et projecit lapidem plumbi (*vel*, pondus; *id est*, massam illam extentam instar operculi; projecit *ergo*) super os ejus (*id est*, super os modii.)

Here I stop; I intended to add all the verses, but I can hardly finish the whole to-day. It will be enough for us to understand that this is the second part of the vision, in which the Prophet, in order to relieve or in some measure to mitigate the sorrow of the Jews, shows, that God would

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not treat them with extreme rigour, so as to punish them as they deserved, but would chastise them with paternal moderation. Hence he says, that a measure appeared to him and a woman in the measure. The woman was wickedness;[1] there was also a covering of lead, a wide or an extended piece. The plate of lead was borne upwards when the woman was seen in the measure. He then says, that the measure was closed up, and that there impiety was kept hid as a captive in prison. He afterwards adds, that it was driven away into the land of Shinar, very far from Judea, and that wickedness was thus turned over to the enemies of the chosen people.

We see that God, as I have already noticed, gives here a token of favour; for he says that wickedness was shut up in a measure. Though then he had spoken hitherto severely, that he might shake the Jews with dread, it was yet his purpose soon to add some alleviation: for it was enough that they were proved guilty of their sins, that they might humble themselves and suppliantly flee to God's mercy, and also that repentance might really touch them, lest they should murmur, as we know they had done, but submit themselves to God and confess that they had suffered justly. Since then the angel had already shown that the curse had deservedly gone over the face of the whole land, because no corner was free from wickedness, the angel now adds, that he came to show a new vision, *Raise*, he says, *now thine eyes, and see what this is which goeth forth.* The Prophet was no doubt cast down with fear, so that he hardly dared to look any

[1] *Impietas;* רִשְׁעָה, rendered "wickedness" in our version, and by *Newcome* and *Henderson;* "the wicked one," by *Blayney;* and ἀνομία—lawlessness, by the *Sept.* It is a general term, which means what is unjust, wrong, wicked or sinful, everything contrary to the will and command of God. *Leigh* renders the adjective "Ungodly, lewd, turbulent, wavering, irreligious towards God, debauched in morals, turbulent in the commonwealth, unsettled in all things." So the noun here may be regarded as including *sin* universally, as committed against God and man. But *Henderson* thinks, and perhaps not without reason, that idolatry is what is especially intended, as the article הָ is prefixed; and this had been the chief sin or wickedness of the people, the mother of many other sins: and this was certainly removed from the people after the Babylonian captivity, as they had never been since guilty of idolatry, though of many other sins.—*Ed.*

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longer. As then the curse was flying and passing freely here and there, the Prophet was struck with horror, and not without reason, since he beheld the wrath of God spreading everywhere indiscriminately. This is the reason why the angel now animates him and bids him to see what was going forth. And he tells what was exhibited to him, for he saw a measure; which in Hebrew is אֵיפָה, *aiphe*:[1] and some render it measure or bushel; others, firkin or cask; but in this there is no difference. When the Prophet saw this measure, he asked the angel what it was: for the vision would have been useless, had he not been informed what the measure and the woman sitting in it signified, and also the lead covering. He therefore asked what they were.

Then the angel answered, *This is the measure that goeth forth, and this is their eye in all the earth.* By saying that the measure is their eye, he no doubt means that the ungodly could not thus be carried away at their own pleasure, but that God restrained them whenever it seemed good to him; for they could not escape his sight. For by their eyes he understands passively the power of seeing in God, by which he notices all the sins of the ungodly, that he may check them when he pleases, when they hurry on without restraint.[2]

But that the meaning of the Prophet may be made more clear, let us first see what wickedness means,—whether it is to be taken for those sins which provoked God's wrath against the Jews,—or whether for those wrongs which heathen enemies had done. The last is the view I prefer,

[1] It is translated "μετρέν—measure," by the *Sept.*, and "modius—a bushel," by *Grotius;* and he says that an ephah was a measure nearly the size of a bushel.—*Ed.*

[2] Respecting this "eye" there are various opinions. *Newcome* and *Blayney* follow the *Sept.* and the *Syriac*, and render it, "their iniquity," עֲוֹנָם; the difference being only of a *vau* instead of a *iod;* and there is one MS. in which it is so found. Then the sentence would be "This *is* their iniquity in all the land." But *Castalio, Grotius, Dathius*, and *Henderson* follow the received text, only they give to עַיִן a similar meaning to that of our version,—form, appearance, resemblance, or emblem, that is, what is seen, what the eye observes; and this sense it evidently has in Lev. xiii. 55; Num. xi. 7; Prov. xxiii. 31; Ezek. i. 4, 7, 16. "The meaning is," says *Grotius*, "that which thou seest symbolizes those things which the Jews have done and which they have suffered."—*Ed.*

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though if we take it for the wickedness which had previously reigned in Judea, the meaning would not be unsuitable. For as wickedness is hateful to God, his vengeance against the Jews could not have ceased except by cleansing them from their sins, and by renewing them by his Spirit. For they had carried on war with him in such a way, that there was no means of pacifying him but by departing from their sins. And whenever God reconciles himself to men, he at the same time renews them by his Spirit; he not only blots out their sins, as to the guilt, but also regenerates those who were before devoted to sin and the devil, so that he may treat them kindly and paternally.

With regard then to the subject in hand, both views may be suitably adopted. We may consider the meaning to be,—that God would take away iniquity from Judea by cleansing his Church from all defilements, since the Jews could not partake of his blessing except iniquity were driven afar off and banished. As God then designed to be propitious to his people, he justly says, that he would cause wickedness to disappear from the midst of them. Yet the other view, as I have said, is more agreeable to the context,—that wickedness would not be allowed freely to prevail as before; for we know that loose reins had been given to the cruelty of their enemies, inasmuch as the Jews had been exposed to the wrongs of all. As then they had been so immoderately oppressed, God promises that all unjust violences should be driven afar off and made to depart into the land of Shinar, that is, that the Lord would in turn chastise the Babylonians and reward them as they had deserved. The import of the whole is, that God, who had chosen the seed of Abraham, would be propitious to the Jews, so as to put an end at length to their calamities.

Now the Prophet says that wickedness, when first seen, was in mid air, and in a measure; but at the same time he calls the measure the eye of the ungodly; for though wickedness extends itself to all parts, yet God confines it within a hidden measure; and this he designates by eyes, whereby he seems to allude to a former prophecy, which we have explained. For he had said that there were seven eyes in the

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stone of the high priest, because God would carry on by his providence the building of the temple. So also he says, that God's eyes are upon all the ungodly, according to what is said in the book of Psalms—"The eyes of the Lord are over the wicked, to destroy their memory from the earth." (Ps. xxxiv. 17.) And this mode of speaking often occurs in Scripture. The meaning then is, that though wickedness spreads and extends through the whole earth, it is yet in a measure; but this measure is not always closed up. However this may be, still God knows how to regulate all things, so that impiety shall not exceed its limits. And this is most true, whatever view may be taken; for when enemies harass the Church, though they may be carried along in the air, that is, though God may not immediately restrain their wrongs, they yet sit in a measure, and are ruled by the eyes of God, so that they cannot move a finger, except so far as they are permitted. Let us in a word know, that in a state of things wholly disordered, God watches, and his eyes are vigilant, in order to put an end to injuries. The same also may be said when God gives up to a reprobate mind those who deserve such a punishment; for though he cast them away, and Satan takes possession of them, yet this remains true—that they sit in a measure. They are not indeed shut in; but we ought not, as I have said, to suppose that God is indifferent in heaven, or that sins prevail in the world, as though he did not see them; for his connivance is not blindness. The eyes of God then mark and observe whatever sins are done in the world.

Now the angel adds, that *a thin piece of lead was cast over the mouth of the measure*, and *that wickedness was cast into the measure*. The expression, that wickedness was thrown into the measure, may be explained in two ways—either that God would not permit so much liberty to the devil to lead the Jews to sin as before; for how comes it that men abandon themselves to every evil, except that God forsakes them, and at the same time delivers them up to Satan, that he may exercise his tyranny over them? or, that a bridle would be used to restrain foreign enemies, that they might not in their wantonness oppress the miserable people, and exercise

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extreme violence. God, then, intending to deliver them from their sins, or to check wrongs, shuts up wickedness, as it were, in a measure; and then he adds a cover; and it is said to have been a thin piece, or a weight of lead, because it was heavy; as though the Prophet had said, that whenever it pleased God iniquity would be taken captive, so that it could not go forth from its confinement or its prison. It afterwards follows—

9. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind *was* in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

10. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?

11. And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

9. Et extuli oculos meos et aspexi, et ecce duæ mulieres egressæ, et Spiritus erat in alis ipsarum, et ipsis alæ erant quasi alæ milvi (*alii vertunt*, ciconiam; *et mihi magis placet, quanquam parum est momenti;*) et extulerunt modium inter terram et inter cœlum.

10. Et dixi angelo qui loquebatur mecum, Quonam istæ deferunt modium?

11. Et dixit mihi, Ad ædificandum ei domum in terra Sinear; et statuetur et stabilietur illic super basim suam. (*Ego potero absolvere paucis verbis hoc vaticinum.*)

The Prophet says here that such would be the change of things, that God would in turn afflict the Chaldeans, who had so cruelly treated the chosen people. And this is the reason why I think that iniquity is to be taken for the violent injustice and plunder which heathen enemies had exercised towards the Jews. For when he says that a *house* would be for *iniquity in the land of Shinar*, it is as though he had said, "as Judea has been for a long time plundered by enemies, and has been exposed to their outrages, so the Chaldeans in their turn shall be punished, not once, nor for a short time, but perpetually; for God will fix a habitation for wickedness in their land." We hence see the design of the vision, that is, that when God had mercy on his Church, its enemies would have to render an account, and that they would not escape God's hand, though he had employed them to chastise his people.

He says then, that wickedness was taken away, that a house might be made for it, that is, that it might have a

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fixed and permanent dwelling in the land of Shinar, which means among the Chaldeans, who had been inveterate enemies to the Jews; and as Babylon was the metropolis of that empire, he includes under it all the ungodly who opposed or persecuted the children of God. Why God represents the measure as carried away by women rather than by men does not appear to me, except it was that the Jews might know that there was no need of any warlike preparations, but that their strongest enemies could be laid prostrate by weak and feeble instruments; and thus under the form of weakness his own power would be made evident. The Prophet saw women with wings, because sudden would be the change, so that in one day, as we shall presently see, wickedness was taken away. By the wings of a *stork* either celerity or strength is indicated. This is the sum of the whole.[1]

[1] *Henry*, *Marckius*, and *Scott*, and also *Newcome*, take a different view of this vision, and consider it as symbolizing the final destruction of the Jews by the Romans. The woman, according to them, represents the apostate people, the two women who carried the measure the Roman armies, the land of Shinar the land of their dispersion, so called on account of their first captivity. *Henderson* regards the vision as symbolic of the banishment of the sin of idolatry from the land of Israel. "In this striking hieroglyphic," he says, "we are taught how idolatry, with all its accompanying atrocities, was removed from the land of the Hebrews, which it had desecrated, to a country devoted to it, and where it was to commingle with its native elements, never to be reimported into Canaan. How exactly has the prediction been fulfilled! From the time of the captivity to the present, a period of more than 2000 years, the Hebrew people have never once lapsed into idolatry!"

This seems to be the most satisfactory view; and I would adopt the reading of the *Septuagint* and the *Syriac*, taking עֵינָם to be עֲוֹנָם, not "their eye," or, "their appearance," but "their iniquity," and I would render verse 8 somewhat different from others, as having been spoken by the angel *while* he was casting the woman into the ephah. I give the following version of the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses,—

6. And I said, "What is it?" And he said, "This is an ephah that is going forth:" he said also, "That (pointing to a woman)
7. *is* their iniquity through the whole land." And, behold, a talent of lead was lifted up, and a woman was sitting in the midst of the ephah: and he said, "This is the wicked one," when he cast her into the midst of the ephah, and cast the leaden weight on its mouth.

"What is it?" signifies here, What does it mean? for the Prophet of course knew it to be an ephah. זֹאת repeated is to be rendered "this" and "that." See 1 Kings iii. 23. The "two women" who carried away the ephah were probably, as *Newcome* observes, "mere agents in the symbolic

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou threatenest us with severe punishment to restrain us from sin, we may regard thy judgment, and not abuse thy long-suffering in sparing us for a time; and also that, whenever thou chastisest us, we may seriously consider that we deserve thy displeasure, as we have in various ways provoked thy wrath: and may we not at the same time despair or be broken down, but learn so to recumb on thy mercy as not to doubt but that there will be a seasonable end to our evils, and that thou wilt not only mitigate the rigour of punishment as far as necessary for our comfort, but wilt also punish our enemies, so that we may know that nothing is better for us, or more desirable, than to be chastised by thy hand, not that thou mayest destroy us, but recall us to the way of salvation, until we be at length made capable of receiving that favour which has been laid up for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-fourth.

1. And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass.

2. In the first chariot *were* red horses, and in the second chariot black horses,

3. And in the third chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.

1. Et conversus sum, et levavi oculos meos, et aspexi; et ecce quatuor quadrigæ egressæ e medio duorum montium; et montes illi, montes æenei.

2. In quadriga prima equi rufi, et in quadriga secunda equi nigri,

3. Et in quadriga tertia equi albi, et in quadriga quarta equi grandinei. (*vel*, varii; אמוצים, robusti, *sed potius subscribo eorum sententiæ qui vertunt* subrufos.)

HERE we have another vision; and the Prophet distinguishes it from the former visions by saying, that he *turned*, as though he had said, that there had been some intervening time. They were not then continued visions, but he turned

vision," not designed to set forth anything in particular; but *Grotius* and *Henderson* think that they designated the Assyrian and the Babylonian powers, through whom idolatry had been removed from the land of Canaan.—*Ed.*

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himself elsewhere, and then he raised up his eyes, and the Lord revealed to him what he now relates. But as the vision is obscure, interpreters have given it different meanings. They who think that the four Gospels are designated by the four chariots, give a very frigid view. I have elsewhere reminded you, that we are to avoid these futile refinements which of themselves vanish away. Allegories, I know, delight many; but we ought reverently and soberly to interpret the prophetic writings, and not to fly in the clouds, but ever to fix our foot on solid ground. Others think that those changes are meant which we know happened in Chaldea and Assyria. As Nineveh was overthrown that Babylon might be the seat of the empire, they suppose that this is meant by the first chariot, the horses of which were red. Then they think that the Persian empire is intended by the second chariot, as the Jews had at the beginning suffered many grievous evils. Afterwards by the white horses are signified, as they suppose, the Macedonian power, as Alexander treated the Jews with humanity and kindness. By the fourth chariot they understand the Roman Empire, and think that the horses are of different colours, because some of the Cæsars raged cruelly against the Jews and the Church of God, and some of them showed more lenity.[1] But I know not whether these things are well founded.

[1] This is the view taken by *Jerome, Cyril, Kimchi, Newcome, Blayney,* and also by *Grotius* and *Parkhurst,* only that they consider the fourth chariot to represent, not the Romans, but the Syrians and Egyptians. See *Parkhurst's* Lex., under אחר. *Henderson* confines all the chariots to the Medes and Persians, as referring to various changes and events until the reduction of Egypt by Xerxes, "the south country" being that land. The basis of every view which may be taken of the chariots, as *Marckius* justly observes, must be the interpretation given by the angel in verse 5; which some translate, "these are the four spirits of the heavens," that is, angels, as in our version, followed by *Newcome* and *Henderson;* and others, such as *Marckius* and *Blayney,* "these are the four winds of heaven;" winds being rendered as a metaphorical expression for God's judgments. See Jer. xlix. 36; Rev. vii. 1-3; and also Ps. cxlviii. 8.

These are the only two renderings of which the words are capable; and the first seems the most appropriate. That God employs angels to execute his purposes both of mercy and of judgment, is a doctrine often taught in Scripture. See Ps. civ. 4; Ezek. i. 6; xxiii. 24; Dan. vii. 10; x. 23; Heb. i. 7, 14. That angels are intended is the view taken by *Piscator, Drusius, Henry, Scott, Newcome,* and *Henderson.* It may be

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We see that the fourth chariot went to the south, and wandered through various regions, and almost through the whole world. As then this cannot be applied to Chaldea, the simpler view seems to be—that the four chariots signify the various changes which happened not only in Chaldea and among the Babylonians, but also in Judea and among other nations: and this may be easily gathered from the context. But as all these things cannot be stated at the same time, we shall treat them in the order in which the Prophet relates them. I shall now repeat what I have elsewhere said respecting the words, that he *raised up his eyes*, as intimating the divine authority of what is predicted. The words indeed signify that he did not bring forward what he had vainly imagined, nor adduce tales which he had himself fabricated, but he was attentive to what was revealed to him; and also that he was somewhat separated from common life in order to be an interpreter between God and men. Hence authority is here ascribed to the prophecy, as Zechariah did not come forth to speak of uncertain things, but as one sent by heaven, for he delivered nothing but what he had received from above.

He now says, that *four chariots* appeared to him, which came forth from *mountains*, and that the two mountains where the chariots were seen were *mountains of brass*. The Prophet no doubt understood by these mountains the providence of God, or his hidden counsel, by which all things have been decreed before the creation of the world; and hence he says, that they were mountains of brass, as they could not be broken. The poets say, that fate is unavoidable (*ineluctabile*); but as this sentiment is profane, it is enough for us to understand it of God's eternal providence, which is immutable. And here is most fitly described to us the counsel of God; for before things break forth into action they are inclosed as it were between the narrow passes of

said, the chariots represented God's purposes; the horses, the angels, and their different colours, the different works which they had to execute. See Rev. vi. 1-8. "The mountains of brass" designate, as *Calvin*, *Blayney*, and many others think, "the firm and unalterable decrees of the Almighty."—*Ed.*

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mountains, inasmuch as what God has decreed is not apparent, but lies hid as it were in deep mountains. Hence we then begin to acknowledge the counsel of God when experience teaches us, that what was previously hid from us has been in this or in that manner decreed. But it was not in vain that Zechariah adds, that they were mountains of brass; it was to teach us that God's counsel is not changeable as foolish men imagine, who think that God is doubtful as to the issue, and is, as it were, kept in suspense: for according to their notions, events depend on the free-will of men. They entertain the idea that God foreknows what is to come conditionally: as this or that will not be, except it shall please men. And though they confess not that God is changeable, yet we gather from their dotages that there is in God nothing sure and certain. The Prophet therefore says here, that they were mountains of brass, because God has fixed before all ages what he has purposed to be done, and thus fixed it by an immutable decree, which cannot be broken by Satan, nor by the whole world.

We hence see how suitable is this representation when the Prophet says, that chariots went forth from mountains.

With regard to the chariots, we have seen elsewhere that angels are compared to horsemen; for these ride swiftly as it were through the whole world to execute what God commands them: so also whatever changes take place, they are called the chariots of God; for either angels are ready at hand to do anything in obedience to God, or the very events themselves are God's chariots, that is, they are as it were swift heralds, who announce to us what was before unknown. Let us then know that all fortuitous events, as they are called by the unbelieving, are God's chariots, are his messengers, who declare and proclaim what was before concealed from us. And there is not in this similitude or metaphor anything strained.

As to the colour of the horses, interpreters, as I have already intimated, have toiled with great anxiety; and though I venture not to assert anything as certain, yet the probable conjecture is, that by the black and white horses are designated the Babylonians rather than the Persians, but for a purpose different from what interpreters have thought. For

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the reference must be to the Jews, when it is said, that black horses and then white horses went forth towards Babylon; for the Holy Spirit intimates, that liberty was given to the Chaldeans to harass the Jews and to fill all places with darkness. The blackness then of which the Prophet speaks signifies the calamities brought on the Jews. The whole of that time was dark, full of grief and sorrow, during which the Chaldeans possessed the oriental empire, and Babylon was the supreme seat of government or of the monarchy. A very different time afterwards succeeded, when the Babylonians were conquered and the Persians enjoyed the oriental empire. The colour then was white, for the favour of God shone anew on the Jews, and liberty was immediately given them to return to their own country. We hence see that the Prophet rightly subjoins, that the colour of the horses was white; for such was the favour shown to the Jews by the Persians, that the sun of joy arose on them, which exhilarated their hearts. But the Prophet makes no mention of the first chariot as going forth, and for this reason, as interpreters think, because the empire of Babylon was then overthrown. But they are mistaken in this, as I have already hinted, because they refer not the colours to the state of God's Church. Hence the Prophet, I doubt not, designedly omits the mention of the going forth of the first chariot, because the Jews had experienced the riding of God's judgment in their own land, for they had been severely afflicted. As God then is wont to execute his judgment first on his own household, and as it is written, "judgment begins at his own house," (1 Pet. iv. 17,) so he purposed to observe the same order in this case, that is, to chastise the sins of the chosen people before he passed over to the Chaldeans and other nations.

As to the last chariot, the Prophet says, that it went forth *toward the south*, and then it went elsewhere, and even through the whole world, for God had so permitted.

Now as to the meaning of this Prophecy nothing will remain obscure, if we hold these elements of truth—that all events are designated by the chariots, or all the revolutions which take place in the world—and that the blind power of

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fortune does not rule, as fools imagine, but that God thus openly makes known to us his own counsel. And why the horses are said to have been, some red, some black, some white, and some somewhat red,[1] the plain answer is this—because God had sent forth his chariots over Judea, which were full of blood: by this then is meant the red colour. But he shows also, that their enemies would have their time, and this had been in part fulfilled; for God had ridden over them with his chariots, having driven his wheels over their land when Nineveh was overthrown. And though the Spirit had not simply a reference to the Assyrians or the Chaldeans, as though he meant by the black colour to designate the wars carried on among them, but rather the calamities brought by them on the Jews, yet I consider the black colour to mean in general the terrible disturbances which took place through the whole of the East; and the Jews could not expect anything agreeable from that quarter, for shortly after a heavier weight fell on their heads. But in the third place the Prophet adds, that there were white horses, that is, when the time was accomplished in which God intended to deliver his Church.

But he says, that the chariots not only went forth to the East, or to Babylon; but he says, that they also ran through the south, and then visited the whole world. That we may more fully understand this, we must regard the design of the Prophet. He meant here, no doubt, to bring some comfort to the Jews, that they might not succumb under their

[1] There are two words to designate the character of the horses belonging to the *fourth* chariot. The first is commonly rendered "grisled" or spotted, and by *Henderson*, "piebald:" and the second word is translated "bay" in our version and by *Newcome;* "grey," by *Henderson;* and "strong" in the *Vulgate*, and by *Jerome*, *Dathius*, and *Blayney*. Strong, vigorous, robust, is its common meaning, and in no other instance it is found to designate a colour. The Septuagint and the Targum have given it this sense; and it is rendered by the former, "particoloured—ψαροὺς," the colour of a starling, and by the latter, "ash-colour—cinereos." But there is no need in this case to depart from the ordinary meaning of the word, strong, robust; these horses being different from the others not only in colour, but also in strength. The rendering of Aquila is "κραταιοί—strong." *Marckius* would apply this term to all the horses, as it stands without a conjunction; but this cannot be, for in verse 7th "the strong ones" are evidently the same with the speckled or "the grisled ones" at the end of the 6th verse.—*Ed.*

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evils, however sharply God might chastise them. And Zechariah sets before them here two things—first, that no part of the earth, or no country, would be exempt from God's judgments, for his chariots would pass through all lands; and secondly, that though the chariots of God, terrible in their appearance on account of the black and red colour, had visited Judea as well as the north, yet the time had already come in which God, having been pacified, would change the state of things; and therefore, in the third place, he sets before them another colour; for God's chariot had been sent forth through Judea, and then God's vengeance had visited Nineveh, and afterwards Babylon: only this had rested, because it had been already in part fulfilled, for God had removed the darkness and brought sunshine to the Jews, and that from Chaldea, inasmuch as the Persians, who then possessed the empire, had begun to treat the Jews with kindness. It now follows—

4. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord?

5. And the angel answered and said unto me, These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

4. Et respondi et dixi ad Angelum, qui loquebatur mecum, Quid hæc sunt, Domine mi?

5. Et respondit Angelus et dixit mihi, Hi quatuor spiritus sunt cœlorum, egredientes è statione apud dominatorem cunctæ terræ, (*alii vertunt*, Hi, *vel*, hæ quadrigæ, ad quatuor ventos cœlorum egrediuntur è loco ubi stant apud dominatorem, &c.)

The Prophet asks the angel again; and by his example we are taught to shake off every indifference, and to render ourselves both teachable and attentive to God if we desire to make progress in the knowledge of these predictions; for if Zechariah, who had separated himself from the world and raised up his eyes and his mind to heaven, stood in need of the teaching and guidance of the angel to instruct him, how much folly and arrogance is it in us to trust in ourselves and to despise the gift of interpretation. But as angels are not sent to us from heaven to explain to us the prophecies, let us avail ourselves of those helps which we know is offered to us by God. There is here prescribed to us both docility, and reverence, and attention. Let us also remember, that

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as soon as men submit themselves to God, the gift of revelation is prepared for them; for it is not in vain that God is often called the teacher of babes. Whosoever then shall be disposed to learn with real meekness and humility, shall not be disappointed of his desire; for we see here that the angel performed his part in teaching Zechariah.

I come now to the words, *The angel answered, These are four spirits*, &c. Some give another rendering, *These* chariots *go forth to the four winds*, or parts of heaven; but this is forced, and the words simply mean, "these are four spirits." The word spirit, I have no doubt, has led interpreters astray, for they have thought it frigid to call different events winds or quarters of the world. But I take this word in a different sense, that is, as designating the impulses of God. I do not then understand them to be four winds, but the secret emotions produced by God. Though God's Spirit is one, yet all actions proceed from him, and whatever is done in the world can with no impropriety be attributed to his Spirit. It is yet certain, that the Prophet alludes to the four quarters of the world, as though he had said, that nothing happens in the world which has not been decreed in heaven; for God's providence includes under it the whole world. Though then the universe is designated here, yet by the Spirit the Prophet means those secret movements which proceed from the eternal counsel and providence of God. And it is a very apt metaphor; for the word Spirit is set in opposition to fortune. We have already said, that profane men imagine that fortune possesses a blind power, but the Prophet says, that all revolutions seen in the world proceed from the Spirit of God, and that they are as it were his spirits or ambassadors.[1]

We now then perceive the real meaning of the Prophet when the angel says, that *these were the four spirits of heaven*. And the word heaven is by no means added in vain, for the Prophet seems here to exclude all other causes, so that sovereignty might remain with God only. For though God works often by instruments, or intermediate causes, as they say, yet his own hidden decree ought to be placed first.

[1] See note in page 65.

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This is the reason why he says that they were the spirits of heaven; he says it, that we may not think that God is dependent on the will of men, or is blended with the intervening causes, but that he himself has fixed whatever he has in his good pleasure determined. We hence see, that they who render the words, "into the four parts of heaven," have not sufficiently considered the intention of the Prophet.

He then says, that they *went forth from their station before the Lord of the whole earth.* Now the Prophet calls that space between the two mountains of brass their station before God. Let us hence know that God does not adopt suddenly new counsels, and that he is not like us who, in emergencies or on occasions unlooked for, attempt this and then that; but that his course is very different, and that things in heaven do not revolve up and down, for the chariots here had a fixed and undisturbed station. For though they were chariots capable of moving quickly, they yet remained still and, as it were, fixed, until God permitted their going forth. We hence learn that when God seems to us to rest, he does not sit idly in heaven, as ungodly men foolishly talk, but that he there determines whatever he intends at a suitable time to do. And then when he says, that the *chariots stood before* God, we may hence conclude, that what seems to be contingency to us is fixed in God's counsel, so that there is a necessity at the same time. How comes it, that the greater part of mankind think that all things are contingent, except that they continue looking at nature only? The will of man is changeable; then changeable is everything that proceeds from the will of man. The tree also either becomes scorched through heat, or dies through cold, or brings forth fruit. They hence conclude that everything is contingent, for there appears to be a changeable variety. When men thus judge of things by nature alone, it is no wonder that they think that contingency reigns in the world. But the Prophet distinguishes here between the things of nature and the counsel of God; for he says, that the chariots stood, and went forth when God commanded them. Was there no motion in the wheels? nay, the chariots were from the first ready to move, how was it then that they rested?

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even because they were detained by the secret purpose of God. Now when he sends them forth they show that celerity which was naturally in them. We hence clearly learn, that those things happen by nature which seem capable of being done in two ways, and that yet the counsel of God is always fulfilled, so that immutable necessity presides, which is at the same time hid from us. The Prophet adds, that the first chariot had red horses. I have now explained the whole of this: what is subjoined remains—

6. The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country.

7. And the bay went forth, and sought to go, that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth.

6. In qua sunt equi nigri, exeunt ad terram Aquilonis, et albi exeunt post eos, et variegati, (*aspersi vario colore,*) exeunt ad terram Australem.

7. Et subrufi (*dicam iterum de voce*) exierunt, et postularunt ut perambularent in terra: et dixit, Ite, perambulate in terra; et perambularunt in terra.

Zechariah explains here each part of the prophecy; but he shows at the same time that two of the chariots hastened towards Chaldea, that it might not be grievous to the Jews that they in the first place had to experience God's judgment. He then shows that God sent his messengers to all parts; but that there had been, or were to be, remarkable and extraordinary changes, especially among the Babylonians. It hence appeared evident, that God had a care for his own people, who had been driven there into exile. And I have already stated the reason why he speaks here of red horses; for they are mistaken who think that the first chariot was sent into Chaldea; for I consider that this refers to the Jews, with whom God's judgment commenced. He then says, that two chariots went towards Babylon, the first was drawn by black horses, and the other by white, because of the kindness shown by the Persians, by whom a new light of joy was brought to the Jews.

With regard to the *land of the south*, the Prophet no doubt alludes to the Egyptians. But he afterwards adds, that the last chariot was conveyed elsewhere, even through the whole

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world. Some render אמוצים, *amutsim*, strong; and this is the proper meaning of the word, for אמץ, *amets*, properly means to fortify, to strengthen; but as colour is intended here, it seems probable to me that it means somewhat red, as some of the Rabbins teach us; for the Prophet mentioned another word before, ברדים, *beredim*, grisled. Hence some interpreters join together the two, and say that the horses were grisled, or spotted like hail, and then that they were אמוצים, *amutsim*, somewhat red. Jerome seems to me to have sufficiently refuted this opinion, because the other horses were אדמים, *ademim*, red, but these were of different colours. And further, it can hardly be suitable to say, that these alone were strong horses who drew this chariot; for we know that God so wonderfully exercised his power against the Chaldeans that two chariots went forth to them, and they would not have been drawn by weak and feeble horses. I hence think that their colour is here designated, and the Prophet calls them once grisled, and then somewhat red.

But he says, that being not satisfied with the land of the south, they asked of God permission to go to and fro through the whole world. And though neither the devil nor the wicked regard God's bidding, but are led, without knowing and against their will, wherever God drives them; yet the Prophet says, that they *asked;* for they could not overstep the limits prescribed to them. Though Satan asked, as to Job, to be allowed to do this and that, we are not yet too curiously to inquire whether Satan asks leave of God whenever he intends to attempt anything; for there is no doubt but that he is carried away by his violent rage to try in every way to overturn the government of God. But this only ought to satisfy us—that neither Satan nor the wicked can advance one inch, except as God permits them. The meaning then is, that after the last chariot went forth first to the land of the south, a permission was given to it to go through the whole world. He now adds—

8. Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north

8. Et vocavit me et locutus est mecum, dicendo, Vide, qui egrediuntur ad terram Aquilonis qui-

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country have quieted my spirit in the north country.

escere fecerunt spiritum meum in terra Aquilonis.

From this verse we learn that the chief object of the vision was—that the Jews might know that the dreadful tumults in Chaldea, which had in part happened, and were yet to take place, were not excited without a design; but that all things were regulated by God's hidden counsel, and also that God had so disturbed and embarrassed the state of that empire, that the end of it might be looked for. There is therefore no reason for any one too anxiously to labour to understand the import of every part of the prophecy, since its general meaning is evident. But why does the angel expressly speak of the land of the south rather than of the land of the north, or of the whole world? Even because the eyes of all were fixed on that quarter; for Chaldea, we know, had been as it were the grave of the Church, whence the remnant had emerged, that there might be some people by whom God might be worshipped. The angel then invites the Jews here to consider the providence of God, so that they might know that whatever changes had taken place in that country, had proceeded from the hidden counsel of God.

The words, they have *quieted my spirit*, are understood by interpreters in two ways. Some think that God's favour towards his people is here designated, as though he had said, that he was already pacified; but others, by the word spirit, understand the vengeance of God, because he had sufficiently poured forth his wrath on the Chaldeans; and both meanings are well adapted to the context. For it was no common solace to the Jews, that God had poured forth his wrath on the Babylonians until it was satiated, as when one ceases not to be angry until he has fulfilled his desire, and this mode of speaking often occurs in Scripture. I am therefore disposed to embrace the second explanation—that God began to be quieted after the second chariot had gone forth; for he was then reconciled to his chosen people, and their deliverance immediately followed. That the Jews might know that God would be propitious to them, he bids them to continue quiet and undisturbed in their minds, until these chariots had run their course through the whole

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of Chaldea; for what the angel now says would be fulfilled, even that the Spirit of God would be quieted, who seemed before to be disturbed, when he involved all things in darkness, even in Judea itself.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are here exposed to so many evils, which often suddenly arise like violent tempests,—O grant, that with hearts raised up to heaven, we may acquiesce in thy hidden providence, and be so tossed here and there according to the judgment of our flesh, as yet to remain fixed in this truth, which thou wouldest have us to believe—that all things are governed by thee, and that nothing takes place except through thy will, so that in the greatest confusions we may always clearly see thine hand, and that thy counsel is altogether right, and perfectly and singularly wise and just; and may we ever call upon thee, and flee to this port—that we are tossed here and there, that thou mayest ever sustain us by thine hand, until we shall at length be received into that blessed rest which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-fifth.

9. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

10. Take of *them of* the captivity, *even* of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah;

11. Then take silver and gold,

9. Et fuit sermo Iehovæ ad me, dicendo,

10. Sume ex transmigratione, nempe ab Heldai, et à Tobia, et à Jedaia; et vade tu die illo, inquam, ad domum Josiæ filii Zephaniæ, qui venerunt è Babylone;

11. Et sume argentum et au-

[1] *Grotius*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson* agree in the view given by *Calvin*, regarding "spirit" here in the sense of wrath or vengeance. See Judges viii. 3; Is. xxxiii. 11. But *Marckius* and *Blayney* render it "wind," as in verse 5th, in the sense of judgment. The latter renders the sentence thus—"See those that went forth against the north country have caused my wind to rest on the north country;" and he adds, "So רוח is used in Jer. iv. 11, 12; and הניח signifies *to cause to rest* or *abide*, that is, *to inflict*. See Is. xxx. 32; Ezek. v. 13; xxiv. 13. And the same verb in *Kal* signifies *to rest* or *settle upon*, as a calamity doth. Ex. x. 14."—*Ed.*

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and make crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest.

rum, et fac coronas, et pone super caput Iehosuæ filii Iozedec, sacerdotis magni.

THIS vision was given to Zechariah that he might inspire weak minds with better hope; for the Jews found that they were hardly pressed on every side by their neighbours, inasmuch as enemies rose up against them before and behind, so that there was no end to their troubles. Hence they who had returned from exile thought themselves wretched in such a state of things. They might indeed have lived in quietness among the Babylonians, and they had become accustomed to that kind of life, so that exile was not so very grievous to them. Thus then the favour of God was turned unto loathing, and was almost hated by them; for they thought it better to be deprived of their country, than to be daily exposed to new assaults. And further, the possession of the land was not of itself desirable, except with reference to the hope given them; that is, because God had promised by his Prophets that the kingdom of David would again be made glorious, and also that the grandeur and glory of the temple would be greater than ever before. When the Jews found themselves continually harassed by their enemies, they thought that all that had been promised was in vain. There is therefore no doubt but that many complaints and many clamours were everywhere raised. Hence that they might cease thus to murmur against God, this vision was given to the Prophet, in which he is bid to take *silver and gold* from four men, and to make two crowns to be set on the head of Joshua the high priest. The design was to make the Jews to feel assured, that the state of the people would be as safe as it was formerly, when the kingly office and the priesthood flourished: for these were the chief ornaments, or the two eyes, as it were, of the body—the priest, a mediator between God and men—and the king, sustaining the person of God in governing the people.

We hence see that by the two crowns is set forth the restoration of the Church: but we must also observe that the two crowns are placed on the head of Joshua, which was new and unusual. A mitre, we know, was given to the

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priests; and we know also that kings were adorned with a diadem; but no one individual was to wear a royal diadem and a sacerdotal mitre. Here then we find a union of royalty and priesthood in the same person, which had never before been the case; for God had in his law made a distinction between the two offices. We hence see that something unknown before is set forth by this prophecy, even this, that the same person would be both a king and a priest. For what Jerome says, among other things, that there might have been many crowns, is weak and frivolous; and further, he contradicts the words of the Prophet; for shortly after he subjoins, that there would be a counsel of peace between the two; that is, between royalty and priesthood. As to what the same author thinks, that there was one crown given to the high priest, it is also false; besides, he subverts as far as he can the whole doctrine of the Prophet. But I leave these trifles; for there is no ambiguity in Zechariah's words when he says, that God commanded him to take silver and gold, that he might make two crowns to set on the head of the high priest. We now perceive the design of the Prophet as to the object of the prophecy, and also the meaning of the words.

Let us now inquire, why the Prophet was bid to take gold from four men; for he says, *Take from the transmigration.* The word הַגּוֹלָה, *egule*, is to be taken in a collective sense, as in many other places. *Take* then from the exiles, who have now returned from Babylon to their own country. But he afterwards mentions four men; and there is some abruptness in the passage, but nothing that obscures the meaning of the Prophet; for he says, *Take from Heldai, and from Tobiah, and from Jedaiah;* and then he adds, *go in that day, enter the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah.* The Prophet no doubt had been commanded to go to these four, and to enter the house of one of them; and this is evident from the end of the tenth verse, where he says, *who have come from Babylon.*[1] He had spoken only of Josiah the

[1] It is better to take the following words as a parenthesis, "and go thou on that day, go even into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah;" then the whole paragraph might be thus rendered,—

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son of Zephaniah; and then he adds, that they had come from Babylon. I come now to the answer. Some interpreters think that these four men supplied the gold and the silver, because they were chief men among the people, and excelled others in piety. Hence they think that these four men were chosen, as a mark of distinction, to supply the gold and the silver to make the crowns: but I conjecture from the end of the chapter that their weakness is here pointed out, even because they were weak in faith and did not believe the promises of God, and thus disheartened others by their example. It is indeed certain that they were men in high authority, and excelled all others, so that the eyes of all were fixed on them; this is certain. But yet their want of faith is what is here reproved, because they did not attend sufficiently to God's promises, and thought themselves disappointed of their hope; for they had left Babylon, where they enjoyed great abundance, and returned

10. Take from the exiles, from Heldai, from Tobiah, and from Jedaiah, (and go thou on that day, go even into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah,) who have come from Babylon;
11. Yea, take *from them* silver and gold, and make a large (or, a double) crown, and set *it* on the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest.

The first part is rendered by *Henderson* as above, and according to *Calvin's* translation; but *Newcome* and *Blayney* follow our version, which does not seem to be correct; for the first "Take" is repeated, and then what the Prophet was to take is mentioned, having previously named the persons from whom the silver and the gold was to be taken.

As to the crown or crowns, various opinions have been entertained. The most consistent with the whole passage is that of *Marckius*, adopted by *Hengstenberg* and *M'Caul*. He thinks that the plural here is used, as it is often in Hebrew, to express what is large, splendid, great, or extraordinary, according to the following examples: שמחות, gladnesses—great gladness, Ps. xlv. 15; חכמות, wisdoms—chief wisdom or true wisdom, Prov. i. 20; חסדים, mercies—great mercy, Lam. iii. 22; מוצאות, goings forth—remarkable going forth, Micah v. 2. To which instances may be added these two: בהמות, beasts—a great beast, Psalm lxxiii. 22; and עגלות, calves—a great calf, Hosea x. 5. In confirmation of this we find the very word here used in its plural form rendered "a crown" in Job xxxi. 36; and it is followed here, in verse 14, by a verb in the singular number. A large, or a splendid, or a double crown is evidently what is meant. Joshua had his sacerdotal mitre before, see chap. iii. 5; and around this was a crown of gold, not of silver, see Exodus xxviii. 36; xxxix. 30; but in the present instance there was to be silver as well as gold. It was therefore an extraordinary crown, and designed clearly to denote what was extraordinary—a priest ruling on a royal throne.—*Ed.*

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to the holy land, and found it uncultivated and desolate. There was indeed required great patience, when they had to plow among thorns and brambles; for that land, as I have already said, had not been regularly cultivated. Those indeed who had been sent from the East, dwelt here and there in it; but lions and wild beasts had come into it, so that the desolation of the land rendered much work necessary, when the Jews returned. I hence doubt not but that the Holy Spirit does here reprove these four men, who ought to have been leaders and standard-bearers to others; on the contrary, they broke down the confidence of the common people. And this, I say, may be learnt from the end of the chapter, where God commands the two crowns to be placed in the temple, to be a memorial to them, that they might see there the condemnation of their unbelief, as we shall show in its place.

The Prophet is bid to *set the two crowns on the head of the high priest.* This, as I have said, was intended as a symbol to denote the union of the two dignities in the person of Christ. It was necessary until the coming of Christ to select the high priest from the posterity of Aaron; and it was also required that the kings should be from the seed of David; so that we observe a distinction between the royal office and the priesthood, not only as to the persons, but also as to the families. It would have indeed been a strange thing to see a king from the tribe of Levi; and it would have been contrary to God's appointed order to see a priest from the tribe of Judah and from the family of David. Since then the king was adorned with his own diadem, and since the high-priest had his own proper mitre, what could this mean, but that the same man was to wear two crowns? Doubtless we observe that there is here some change in the past order of things, and that there is something unusual set forth. But there is nothing new in this,—that the Redeemer, who had been promised, should be eminent as a king and a priest; for this had been predicted in the hundred and tenth Psalm, "Jehovah said to my Lord, sit on my right hand,"—this is what belongs to the right of a king; it afterwards follows, "Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Mel-

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chizedec." Though kings must then have been chosen from the family of David and the tribe of Judah, and though priests must have then been taken from the Levitical tribe, yet the Spirit foretold, that a king would come who was to be a priest, as had been the case with Melchisedec. This very thing is what the Prophet now confirms.

Zechariah being ordered to *set the crowns* on the head of Joshua, we are not so to regard this, as though Joshua had immediately undertaken the two offices of a king and a priest; for he was satisfied with his own: but the Prophet shows in the type what was to be looked for at the coming of the Messiah; for the time had not yet come, when Christ should receive the royal diadem, as it is said in Ezekiel,—"Take away the diadem; . . . . set it aside, set it aside, set it aside, until he shall come, whose it is." (Ezek. xxi. 26, 27.) We here see that the Prophet points out a length of time, during which the royal diadem was to be trodden as it were under foot. Though the royal crown had not yet laid in the dust sufficiently long, yet the Prophet did nothing presumptuously; for the Jews could not have conceived in their mind what is here promised, had not the typical priest come forth, wearing the two crowns. Nor could this have been so suitable to the person of Zerubbabel; for though he was of the family of David, and was a type of Christ, he had not yet the name of a king, nor had he any regal power: he could not therefore have been so suitable a person. It is then no wonder that God brought forth the high priest Joshua, who was a type and representative of Christ; and he brought him forth with a double crown, because he who was to come would unite, according to what follows, the priesthood with the kingly office.

12. And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord:

13. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon

12. Et dic ad eum, dicendo (loquere ad eum, dicendo; *repetitur bis idem verbum;*) sic dicit Iehova exercituum, dicendo, Ecce vir, Germen nomen ejus; et e loco suo germinabit, et ædificabit templum Iehovæ;

13. Et ipse ædificabit templum Iehovæ, et ipse gestabit decus (*vel*, gloriam) et sedebit, et dominabitur super solium suum; et erit sacerdos su-

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his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

per solium suum, et consilium pacis erit inter hos duos (*vel*, inter utrumque.)

The vision is now explained; for if the chief priest, without this explanation, had been adorned with two crowns, there must have been much talk among the people, "What means this?" God here shows that what he has commanded to be done to Joshua does not belong to him, but has a reference to another, *Thou shalt say to him, Behold the man, Branch is his name.* It is the same as though the Prophet had expressly testified that Joshua was not crowned, because he was worthy of such an honour, or because he could look for royal dignity; but that he was to bear this honour for a time, in order that the Jews might understand that one was to arise who would be both a king and a priest. Hence he says, that there would be a *man*, whose name was to be *Branch.*

As to this name, it has been explained elsewhere. I omit those refinements with which some are delighted; but as I have shown in another place, the simple and true reason why Christ is so called, is, because he was not like a tall tree, with deep and strong roots, but like a small plant. He is indeed called in another place, "a shoot from the root of Jesse." (Is. xi. 1.) But the meaning is the same; for that root of Jesse was obscure and of no repute. Besides, this kind of shoot has nothing in it that is illustrious. We hence see that Christ is called Branch, because his beginning was contemptible, so that he was of hardly any repute among heathens, nay even among his own nation. But God intimates at the same time, that this little plant would be set, as it were, by his own hand, and thus would gather strength. Though then the beginning of Christ was humble, yet God declares, that he would give vigour for continued growth, until he should attain to a great height. In this sense it is that Christ is called Branch: and we clearly conclude, that the minds of the people were transferred to Christ who was to come, that they might not fix their attention on Joshua, who was then but a typical priest. *Say to Joshua, Behold the man, whose name is Branch.* Where is that man? He

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does not speak of Joshua; he does not say, "Thou art the man;" but he says, *Behold the man, whose name is Branch*, that is, who comes elsewhere. We then hence learn, that these crowns were those of Christ, but given to Joshua, that the Jews might see in the type, what was as yet hid under hope.

He afterwards adds, *He shall arise from himself*, or *grow up from his own place*, literally, from under himself. Here also some have too refinedly philosophized,—that Christ arose from himself by his own power, because he is the eternal God. I think, on the contrary, that all human means are only excluded, as though the Prophet had said, that though Christ was like a little plant, he would yet grow up as though he had roots deeply fixed in the earth. There is indeed no doubt, but that Christ grew up by his own celestial power, and this is what the words of the Prophet include; but what he meant was this,—that Christ had nothing in his beginning calculated to draw the admiration of men. Though then Christ was only a shoot, yet God had sufficient power, that he should *grow from his own place*,[1] that though human means were absent, it would yet be enough, that God should bless this branch, so as to cause it to grow to its proper height.

He then says, *And he shall build the temple of Jehovah*. This is a remarkable passage: it hence appears that the temple which the Jews had then begun to build, and which was afterwards built by Herod, was not the true temple of which Haggai had prophesied, when he said, "The glory of the second house shall be greater than that of the first." (Hag. ii. 9.) For though the temple of Herod was splendid, yet we see what the Spirit declares in this place,—that to build the temple would be Christ's own work. Hence no one, had he heaped together all the gold and the silver of

[1] And he shall branch out from his place,—*Newcome*. *Henderson* follows our version. The *Targum's* version is remarkable, "Behold the man, Messiah is his name; who shall be revealed." The metaphor is dropped, and revelation or manifestation was understood to be the meaning of "growing out of his place." "Out of his place," that is, "out of Bethlehem," says *Henry*. "Out of David's root, tribe and family," says *Adam Clarke*.—*Ed.*

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the world, could have built the true temple of which Haggai prophesied, and of which Ezekiel has so largely spoken near the end of his book. Christ alone then has been chosen by the Father to build this temple. Christ indeed himself was a temple as to his body, for the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him, (Col. ii. 6;) but he built a temple to God the Father, when he raised up everywhere pure worship, having demolished superstitions, and when he consecrated us to be a royal priesthood.

We now then see what was shown to the Prophet,—that though the Jews were then exposed to many evils, to reproaches and wrongs, yet Christ would come to restore all things to a perfect order, that he would be not only a king but also a priest; and further, that his beginning would be obscure and despised by the world, and yet that he would attain without any earthly helps his own elevation; and, lastly, that his own proper office would be to build a temple to God.

He repeats the last thing which he had said, *Even he shall build the temple of Jehovah.* The Prophet seems here to reiterate to no purpose the same words without any addition of light: but it seems evident to me, that he meant in this way to confirm and sanction what seemed difficult to be believed. As the temple, then, begun at that time to be built, had but little splendour and glory connected with it, and could hardly be expected to become a better or more adorned building, the Prophet reiterates this promise, *He, he shall build the temple of Jehovah;* by which he means, "Let not your eyes remain fixed on this temple, for to look at it weakens your faith and almost disheartens you; but hope for another temple which ye see not now, for a priest and a king shall at length come to build a better and a more excellent temple."

He afterwards subjoins, *Bear shall he the glory, and shall sit and rule on his throne.* He fully confirms what we have already referred to—that this man, who was to grow by God's hidden power, would be made both a king and a priest, but by no earthly instrumentality. In the words, *bear shall he the glory*, there is no doubt an implied contrast between

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Joshua and Christ, the true priest. For Joshua, though he discharged in his time the office of a priest, was yet despised; but the Prophet bids his people to hope for more than what could have been conceived from the view of things at that time; for an illustrious priest was to come, full of royal dignity. And hence he adds, *sit shall he and rule on his throne.* This did not properly belong to the priesthood; but the Prophet affirms, that the man who was to come from above, would be a king, though he exercised the priestly office. He was then to be a priest, and yet to be on his throne and to rule as a king; and ruling is what belongs to a king and not to a priest.

At length he concludes by saying, *The counsel of peace shall be between the two.* I do not think that the discords which had been between kings and priests are here indirectly reproved. I indeed allow that such discords had often been seen among that ancient people; but the Prophet had regard to something far different, even this—that the priesthood would be united with the kingly office. He therefore did not refer to different persons who were to be at peace together; but, on the contrary, spoke of things or of the two offices; *there shall* then *be the counsel of peace between the two,* that is, between the kingly office and the priesthood.[1] We hence learn that which I have already stated—that what is here promised had not been found under the law, and could not have been expected under it; and that the fulfilment of this prophecy is the renovation which took place at the coming of Christ. It follows—

14. And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah,

14. Et coronæ erunt ipsi Chelem (*pro* Chadai, *probabilis conjectura est fuisse hunc*

[1] There are especially two interpretations of this sentence; the one adopted by *Calvin,* and also by *Jerome, Marckius, Drusius, Dathius, Scott,* and *Henderson;* and the other is, that the "two" are Jehovah, and the Branch or Messiah, and that the "throne" mentioned is the throne of Jehovah. This is the interpretation of *Vitringa, Cocceius, Henry, M'Caul,* and *Adam Clarke.* The objection of *Dathius* to the last view, that is, that Jehovah is the speaker, and therefore cannot be understood here as the third person is used, seems not to be valid, for the third person is used before in the words, "the temple of Jehovah." But the first interpretation seems the most appropriate and significant—the concord and agreement between the two offices.—*Ed.*

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and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

binomium, sicut etiam Iosia filius Zephaniæ vocatur etiam Chen; erunt *ergo* tam ipsi Chelem quàm) Tobiæ et Iodaiæ filio Zephaniæ in memoriale in Templo Iehovæ.

They who think that the crowns were deposited with these four men, pervert the meaning of the Prophet; for they were, on the contrary, placed in God's temple to be a memorial to them. It hence appears, that, as I have already said, they were not required to supply the gold, because they excelled all others in piety and holiness, but because it was necessary to condemn their want of faith, inasmuch as they thought that their hope was disappointed, as God did not immediately fulfil what he had promised. *Let* then *these crowns,* saith the Spirit, *be a memorial to them,* that is, that whenever they look on these crowns they may check themselves and know that their expectations are very unreasonable, and that they themselves are too hasty when they wish all prophecies to be accomplished in one day; and also that the whole people may know that they had complained without reason, as these suspended crowns shall be a memorial and a testimony. We now then see more clearly why the Prophet had been ordered to take gold and silver from these four men: it was, that he might make crowns, which were afterwards to be deposited in God's temple. At length he adds—

15. And they *that are* far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord; and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. And *this* shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.

15. Et longinqui venient, et ædificabunt in templo Iehovæ; et scietis quòd Iehova exercituum miserit me ad vos: et erit si audiendo audieritis vocem Iehovæ Dei vestri.

The Prophet also states, that men would come from remote lands to contribute labour or wealth towards the building of the temple; for the word building may refer to either of these two things. *Come* then *shall those from far.* Before this time gifts had been presented by Gentile nations, but the temple was not built but by Solomon and his people. God then promises here something more, and that is, that helpers would assist in building the temple, who had been

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till then wholly aliens. It is indeed certain, that in the age of Zechariah contributions had been made by Cyrus; but the Prophet refers to nothing of this kind: he promises something more. It hence follows that this prophecy must necessarily be referred to the promulgation of the gospel; for then it was that strangers began to contribute their labour and their wealth towards building a temple to God. Though then Cyrus gave a large sum of money towards the erection of the temple, yet the allusion here is not to his liberality. And after Cyrus no stranger had been so liberal: for Herod, who raised up a great and a very splendid building, was not from far; nay, he wished to be thought one of the people. We then see that this prophecy cannot be otherwise referred than to the building of the spiritual temple, when Gentiles, formerly remote from God's people, joined them as friends, and brought their labour to the work of building the temple, not with stones or wood, or with other corruptible materials, but with the doctrine and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

He then adds, *ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me to you.* Of this kind of knowledge we have spoken elsewhere. It indeed behoved the Jews from the first to feel assured respecting the truth of this prophecy; but when the effect or experience itself was added, they then began to know more clearly. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, "God, who speaks by my mouth, will not disappoint you, as he will at length accomplish what I now declare; and experience itself will be a witness that I have been a true and faithful Prophet." And he calls Him the God *of hosts*, that the Jews, hearing that what he had said proceeded from Him whose power is infinite, might be confirmed in their faith. There was then no reason for them to doubt as to the accomplishment, for there is nothing that can resist God, when it pleases him to unfold his power.

It follows, *If by hearing ye will hear the voice of Jehovah your God.* Zechariah promises to the Jews here conditionally—if they became obedient to God, and continued in obedience to his word and in his doctrine; for unbelief deprives men of all participation in God's favour. It is indeed

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true that had all become unbelieving, Christ would have come; for God as he is true would not change his purpose were the whole world to become false. Since then the faithfulness of God depends not on men, we ought not so to take what the Prophet says here, *If ye will hear the voice of Jehovah*, as though they could, by being unfaithful to God, have rendered void the accomplishment of this prophecy. Their defection, then, yea, that of the whole nation, could not have prevented Christ from coming forth in his own appointed time. But the Prophet had another thing in view, even this—that the Jews would become partakers of this blessing, or would enjoy, so to speak, this favour, if they embraced God's promise, and obediently submitted to his law. For though Christ has already come as the Redeemer of the world, yet we know that this benefit is not come to all, and why? Because many through unbelief close the door against God and his grace through Christ. Hence the faithful alone really know that God has spoken, and really partake of his favour, and for this reason, because they *hear his voice;* that is, they first by faith receive what God offers, and then they fall not away from his truth, but continue in the obedience of faith to the end.

What the Prophet then had in view, was to show to the Jews that those things were spoken in vain, as to them, if they did not attend to God. And he shows the way in which they were to be attentive, even by hearing the voice of God, that is, by renouncing their own thoughts, and by not esteeming God untrue, though he promised what seemed incredible. If then they denied themselves, banished their own imaginations, wholly attended to God's word, and believed what he had said as a Prophet, he assures them that they would really find that which he taught them to be true to their own salvation, even this—that Christ would come to be a king and a priest, to secure perfect happiness to his people.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thy Son has been made known to us, through whom is brought to us the perfection of all blessings and of true and real glory,—O grant, that we may continue settled in him, and never turn here and there, nor fluctuate in any way, but be so satisfied with his kingship and priesthood, as to deliver up ourselves wholly to his care and protection, and never doubt but that we are so sanctified by his grace as to be now acceptable to thee, and that relying on him as our Mediator, we may offer ourselves as a sacrifice to thee with full confidence of heart, and thus strive to glorify thee through the whole course of our life, that we may at length be made partakers of that celestial glory which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son.—Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-sixth.

1. And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah in the fourth *day* of the ninth month, *even* in Chisleu;

1. Et factus est (datus est,) anno quarto Darii regis, sermo Iehovæ ad Zachariam, quarta die mensis noni Chisleu;

2. When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regem-melech, and their men, to pray before the Lord,

2. Nam miserat in domum Dei (*hoc est*, Templum) Sareezer et Regem-melech et viros ejus ad deprecandam faciem Iehovæ (*aut*, Miserat in domum Dei Sareezer et Regem-melech, *in nominativo casu*, et viri ejus ad deprecandam faciem Iehovæ:)

3. *And* to speak unto the priests which *were* in the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

3. Ad dicendum sacerdotibus qui erant in domo Iehovæ exercituum, et Prophetis, dicendo, An flebo mense quinto? Separabo me? quemadmodum feci his annis? (*est turbata series verborum*, quemadmodum solitus sum facere his annis?)

THERE is no vision here, but the answer which Zechariah was commanded to give to the messengers of the captives: for he says that some had been sent from Chaldea to offer sacrifices to God, and at the same time to inquire whether the fast, which they had appointed when the city was taken

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and destroyed, was to be observed. But there is some ambiguity in the words of the Prophet, for it is doubtful whether the two whom he names, even Sherezer and Regem-melech, together with the others, had sent the messengers of whom mention is made, or they themselves came and brought the message from the captives. But this is a matter of no great moment. As to the question itself, I am disposed to adopt their view, who think that these two came with their associates to Jerusalem, and in the name of them all inquired respecting the fast, as we shall hereafter see.[1] The Jews think that these were Persian princes; but this opinion is frivolous. They are thus accustomed to draw whatever occurs to the glory of their own nation without any discretion or judgment, as though it had been an object much desired by the Jews, that two Persians should go up to the temple. But there is no need here of a long discussion; for if we regard the Prophet's design, we may easily conclude that these were Jews who had been sent by the exiles, both to offer gifts and to inquire about the fast, as the Prophet tells us. The sum of the whole then is, that Sherezer

[1] *Grotius, Newcome*, and others adopt this view; but *Blayney* justly says that בית־אל is nowhere used in Scripture for the temple; and therefore he, in accordance with the *Septuagint*, *Targum*, and the *Syriac*, regards it as the name of the city so called, and situated in the tribe of Benjamin. So *Drusius, Henderson*, and others. Then the true version of the whole passage, and the most literal, would be the following:—

2. When Bethel sent Sherezer and Regem-melech and its men to
entreat the face of Jehovah, *and* to speak to the priests who were
3. over the house of Jehovah of hosts, and to the prophets, saying,
"Shall I weep in the fifth month, separating myself as I have done
4. these so many years?" then came the word of Jehovah of hosts to
5. me, saying, "Speak to all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying,"—
"When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh, even
6. these seventy years, fasting did ye fast to me, even to me? and
when ye ate and when ye drank, were not ye yourselves the eaters
7. and ye yourselves the drinkers? Were not these the words which
Jehovah proclaimed by the former Prophets, when Jerusalem was
inhabited and peaceable, and her cities around her, and *when* the
south and the plain were inhabited?"

"Bethel" here means the town; and therefore "its," and not "his men," is the proper version; and instead of "Shall I weep," the most suitable rendering would be, "Shall we weep." That the inhabitants of Judea are intended, and not messengers from Babylon, is quite evident from the fifth verse, "Speak to all the people of the land."—*Ed.*

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and Regem-melech, and their companions, came to the temple, and that they also asked counsel of the priests and Prophets, whether the fast of the fifth month was still to be observed.

It must first be observed, that though all had not so much courage as to return to their own country as soon as leave was given them, they were not yet gross despisers of God, and wholly destitute of all religion. It was indeed no light fault to remain torpid among the Babylonians when a free return was allowed them; for it was an invaluable kindness on the part of God to stretch forth his hand to the wretched exiles, who had wholly despaired of a return. Since then God was prepared to bring them home, such a favour could not have been neglected without great ingratitude. But it was yet the Lord's will that some sparks of grace should continue in the hearts of some, though their zeal was not so fervid as it ought to have been. The same sloth we see in the present day to be in many, who continue in the filth of Popery; and yet they groan there, and the Lord preserves them, so that they do not shake off every concern for religion, nor do they wholly fall away. All then are not to be condemned as unfaithful, who are slothful and want vigour; but they are to be stimulated. For they who indulge their torpor act very foolishly; but at the same time they ought to be pitied, when there is not in them that desirable alacrity in devoting themselves to God, which they ought to have. Such an instance then we see in the captives, who ought to have immediately prepared themselves for the journey, when a permission was given them by the edicts of Cyrus and Darius. They however remained in exile, but did not wholly renounce the worship of God; for they sent sacred offerings, by which they professed their faith; and they also inquired what they were to do, and showed deference to the priests and Prophets then at Jerusalem. It hence appears, that they were not satisfied with themselves, though they did not immediately amend what was wrong. There are many now, who, in order to exculpate themselves, or rather to wipe away (as they think) all disgrace, despise God's word, and treat us with derision; nay, they devise

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crimes with which they charge us, with the view of vilifying the word of the Lord in the estimation of the simple. But the Prophet shows that the captives of whom he speaks, though not so courageous as they ought to have been, were yet true servants of God; for they sent sacrifices to the temple, and also wished to hear and to learn what they were to do.

He says first, that messengers were sent to *entreat the face of Jehovah*. Here by the word entreating or praying, the Prophet means also sacrifices. For it is certain that the Jews prayed in exile, as there could have been no religion in them had they not exercised themselves in prayer. But the mention made here is of that stated prayer, connected with sacrifices, by which they professed themselves to be God's people. We may hence also learn, that sacrifices of themselves are of no great importance, since prayer, or calling on God, has ever the first place. Sacrifices then, and other offerings, were, as we may say, additions; (*accessoria*—accessions;) for this command ought ever to be regarded by the faithful, "offer to me the sacrifice of praise." (Ps. l. 14.)

He says, in the second place, that messengers were sent, that they might learn from the priests and the Prophets what was to them doubtful. We hence conclude, that it was no gross dissimulation, such as is found in hypocrites who pretend to pray to God, but that there was a real desire to obey. And, doubtless, when God's word and celestial truth are despised, there is then neither any real prayer, nor any other religious exercise; for unbelief pollutes and contaminates whatever is otherwise in its nature sacred. Whosoever then desires rightly to pray to God, let him add faith, that is, let him come to God in a teachable frame of mind, and seek to be ruled by his word. For the Prophet in telling us what was done, no doubt keeps to the method or the order observed by the captives. It was then worthy of praise that they not only were anxious to seek God's favour by prayers and sacrifices, but that they also sought to know what was pleasing to God. Nor was it a matter of wonder that they sent to Jerusalem on this account, for they knew

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that that place had been chosen by God as the place from which they were to seek the right knowledge of religion. Since then Jerusalem was the sanctuary of God, the captives sent there their messengers, particularly as they knew that the priests were the ambassadors of God, and that the interpretation of the law was to be sought from their mouth. They indeed knew that the time was not yet come when the doctrine of salvation was to be disseminated through the whole world.

But the Prophet says, that the captives not only enquired of the priests, but also of the Prophets. It hence appears, that it was a thing commonly known, that God had raised up Prophets, which he had ceased to do for a long time. For it was not without reason that Isaiah said, that God would yet speak by his Prophets, when he would again comfort his people. (Is. xl. 1.) There had been then a mournful silence for seventy years, when no Prophets were sent forth, according to what is said in the book of Psalms, "our signs we see not, nor is there a Prophet among us." (Ps. lxxiv. 9.) God indeed had been accustomed to lead the people as by an erected banner when they dwelt in the holy land, and Prophets continually succeeded one another in regular order, according to what the Lord had promised by Moses, "A Prophet will I raise up in the midst of thee," &c. (Deut. xviii. 15.) From the time then in which they had been driven into exile, while looking there on one another, they could hear no voice to encourage them with hope, until new Prophets were again raised up beyond what they expected. And it was God's will that the Prophets should have their abode and habitation at Jerusalem, in order that he might gather the dispersed Israel; for had there been Prophets in Chaldea, many might hence lay hold of a pretext for their slothfulness: "Does not God dwell in the midst of us? what need is there of undertaking a difficult and toilsome journey? we shall indeed find nothing better at Jerusalem than in this exile; for God shows that he is present with us by his Prophets." It would have therefore been a great evil to the Jews to have Prophets in their exile. But when the captives heard that the gift of prophecy appeared

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again in the temple, they might have called to mind what their fathers had heard from the mouth of Isaiah, and also from the mouth of Micah, "from Zion shall go forth a law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Is. ii. 3; Mic. iv. 3.) We now perceive why Zechariah joined Prophets to priests.

But we must bear in mind what we have stated elsewhere —that the prophetic was, as it were, an extraordinary office, when God took others as the ministers of his word besides the priests. For their work was sacerdotal; but God meant to condemn the priests by transferring the work of teaching to others, that is, when Prophets were taken from the common people, or from other families, and not from the Levitical tribe. It is not indeed true that all the priests were Prophets; but the office itself would not have been transferred to any other tribe, had not God thus punished the ingratitude of those who bestowed more labour on their own private concerns than on teaching the people. However this case may have been, it was an illustrious testimony of God's favour, that Prophets at that time had again been raised up. And this fact has been added—that they dwelt nowhere else but at Jerusalem, in order to encourage the dispersed to return, and to show to them that the place had not in vain been previously chosen by God. This is the reason why the Prophet expressly says, that the Prophets, as well as the priests, were in the house or in the temple of the Lord of hosts.

The time is also mentioned, *the fourth year of Darius, and the ninth month* and *the fourth day.*[1] The beginning of the year, we know, was in March; hence the month *Chisleu* was November, or a part of October and November, for they were wont to commence their months at the new moons. Of king Darius we have spoken elsewhere. He was not, indeed, the first Darius, the father-in-law of Cyrus, who transferred the monarchy to the Persians, but Darius the son of Hystaspes. Passed away then had the seventy years, for this, as it has been stated before, was the fourth king.

Let us now consider the question which the captives pro-

[1] Two years had elapsed since the "visions" recorded in the former chapters.—*Ed.*

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posed to the priests. They asked whether they were to weep in the fifth month, and whether they were to separate themselves as they had done for seventy years and more; for some years, as we have seen, had elapsed beyond that number. We hence learn that a regular fast was observed from the time in which the temple was burned and the city destroyed. He speaks here only of the fifth month, but shortly after mention is made of the seventh month. It is evident from sacred history that the city was demolished and the temple pulled down in the fifth month. It is therefore probable that there was a day of mourning observed by the people in memory of that sad event. In the seventh month, though not in the same year, Gedaliah was slain, and the remainder of the people were driven into exile. As the land became then desolate, it is also probable that another fast was appointed, that they might yearly humble themselves before God, and suppliantly seek his pardon. Since then there was a reason for both fasts, it is evident that they could not have been condemned by the priests: nor is there a doubt, but that it was by the public consent of all, that they every year kept these days of weeping. We also see the end which God has in view in prescribing a fast,—that men in coming to him may feel true penitence, and remind themselves by their external appearance of their own guilt. As then the Jews observed this rule in their fasts, we must conclude that they pleased God; for these were religious exercises, by which they might have been led to repentance.

Now they inquired, whether they were to continue their weeping; for the temple had now been begun to be built as well as the city. Since the reason for their mourning had been, that the temple no longer stood where they might offer their sacrifices, and that the holy city had been demolished, it was then doubtless right to give thanks to God, and to feel joy, when an end came to their calamities. However, the captives ventured not to change anything without the authority and consent of the priests, so that they might all agree together. And thus they also testified that they were true members of the Church, as they had no desire to have anything different from others.

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The word fast is not mentioned; but they asked, "Shall we weep?" Hence also it appears, that they were not so gross in their ideas as to think that the chief part of religion is fasting, as hypocrites do, who imagine that they honour God by abstaining from food, and thus mock God, who is a Spirit, with mere trifles, when it is his express will to be spiritually worshipped. We then plainly see, that the Jews were not imbued with this gross and foolish thought, when they established this annual fast; for they put weeping in the place of fasting. And why was this weeping, except that they went into God's presence conscious of their guilt and in a suppliant manner, and testified by external signs that they acknowledged their sins, so that they might obtain mercy and forgiveness?

They mentioned also *consecration*. The word נָזַר, *nezar*, which means to separate, is variously explained: but here many interpreters confine it to abstinence from food, as though they had said, "Shall we separate ourselves from food?"[1] This seems forced to me: I therefore prefer to apply it to sanctification; for we know that when a day was prescribed for fasting or for offering sacrifices, there was sanctification added. For though it became the Jews through their whole life to abstain from all defilements, yet we know that when a fast or any particular sacrifice was appointed, they were more diligent and solicitous to cast aside every pollution. We now then understand what the Jews had in view, and what they meant by these words. It now follows—

4. Then came the word of the Lord of hosts unto me, saying,

5. Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, *even* to me?

6. And when ye did eat, and when

4. Et datus sermo Iehovæ exercituum mihi fuit, dicendo,

5. Dic ad totum populum terræ et ad sacerdotes, dicendo, Quum jejunastis et planxistis in quinto et septimo (mense, *subaudiendum est*) et his septuaginta annis, an jejunando jejunastis mihi, mihi?

6. Et quum comedistis, et quum

[1] The word means literally "nazariting." It was to do after the manner of the Nazarites, who abstained from all delicacies, and from society. It appears to have been such abstinence as betokened grief and mourning; for so we find from the answer, "when ye fasted and *mourned*," &c. The *Targum's* version is, "When I restrained my soul from pleasures."—*Ed.*

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ye did drink, did ye not eat *for yourselves*, and drink *for yourselves?*

7. *Should ye* not *hear* the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when *men* inhabited the south and the plain?

8. And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying,

9. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother.

bibistis, annon vos comedistis et vos bibistis?

7. Annon ad sermones quos clamavit Iehova in manu prophetarum priorum, quum esset Ierusalem quieta et opulenta (*vel*, quieta et tranquilla; *diximus enim alibi de hac voce* ישבת) et urbes ejus per circuitus ejus, et meridies, et campestris regio quieta?

8. Et factus est sermo Iehovæ ad Zachariam, dicendo,

9. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, dicendo, judicium veritatis (*hoc est*, verum; *non fallax, sincerum et integrum*) judicate, et beneficentiam et misericordias facite quisque cum fratre suo.

Here the Prophet tells us that he was sent to the people and to the priests, not so much to teach the messengers who came from distant lands, as to correct the vices of his own nation; for the Jews had then begun, according to their usual manner, to dissemble with God, and had glided, as it has elsewhere appeared, into many evil practices. And it appears evident, that God did not commit to Zechariah what the messengers might bring back to Chaldea; but that an occasion was taken to remind the Jews, that they were to look to themselves. It may have been the case, that the priests themselves and all the rest had begun to raise a controversy, "How is this? our brethren inquire, whether the fast is to be still observed:" and the opinions might have been various. But as this is doubtful, I leave it as such. We however see that the Prophet does not speak here respecting the captives, nor does he address to their messengers anything which they might convey to Chaldea, but turns his discourse to the priests and to the people. The sum of the whole is, that while the captives gave no mean testimony of their religion, God reproved the Jews, who had returned to their own country, for ingratitude, as they had already begun to pollute themselves.

He therefore brings this charge against them, *Have ye fasted to me? have ye eaten to me?* as though he had said, "God regards not fastings, except they proceed from a sincere

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feeling and tend to a right and lawful end." It was then the object of the Prophet to awaken the Jews, that they might not imagine that God was pacified by fasting or by any other frigid ceremonies, but that they might know that something more was required. And we see how prone mankind are to rely on external rites, and to think that they have rightly performed their duty to God when they have fasted. As then human nature labours under this disease, the Prophet is here sent to dissipate this delusion; which he does by declaring that fasting does not please God, or is acceptable to him, as though it were something meritorious, or as though there was in it any holiness.

He says first, that *the word of Jehovah was given* to him, that he might go to *the people of the land and to the priests.* We see the truth of what I have already said, that the answer was not directed to the captives, but to the very inhabitants of the land and to the citizens of Jerusalem, and for this reason,—because they thought that when the question respecting fasting was moved, the first and chief part of all religion was the subject of inquiry. Hence God, that he might strip them of this superstition, says, *When ye fasted in the fifth month and in the seventh month, and during the seventy years,* did ye fast to me—to me? for he has put an affix to the verb, צמתני, *tsametni*, and afterwards added אני, *ani:* as though he had said, "Was it to me that ye fasted? Shall I approve of such fasting?" There is an emphasis in the repetition, as though he had said, that there was no reason for the Jews to boast that they faithfully served God, and fully performed their duty, because they fasted twice in the year, for they had to do with that God who rejected such trifling things.

We hence learn that nothing is more preposterous than for men to judge of God's worship according to their own notions, and to trust in themselves. It is indeed easy for us to deceive ourselves; for as we are earthly, so we may think that whatever glitters before our eyes is most acceptable to God. But the Prophet here reminds us, by one sentence, how frivolous are such self-pleasing thoughts; for God meets us with this question, "*Have ye fasted to me?* Are

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ye to be judges, and is it right for you at your pleasure to invent various modes of worship? But I remain always like myself. Do not transform me according to what pleases you; for I repudiate everything of this kind."

By saying, that to themselves they did *eat* and *drink*, he intimates that to eat and to drink, or to abstain from eating and drinking, are things wholly unconnected with the worship of God. Another sense may indeed be elicited,—that the Jews did eat as heathens did: and there will be in this case an indirect reproof,—that they sought to pacify God only twice in the year, and that during the rest of the time they were heedless and indulged themselves in excesses. We ought indeed to bear in mind what Paul says, that "whether we eat or drink, all things ought to be done to the praise of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) The law also expressly commanded the Jews to "feast before the Lord," that is, not to taste food without thanksgiving, as though God were present. When, therefore, the Jews feasted themselves without any regard to God, it is no wonder that their fastings were rejected; for their course was not consistent. For though the godly do not always fast, yet while they partake most freely of meat and drink, they turn not away their thoughts from God, but on the contrary rejoice before him. They therefore eat and drink to God, as well as abstain on God's account. But the Prophet shows here that the Jews *did eat to themselves*, and that hence their fasting was not regarded before God. This latter sense is not unsuitable: but as to the subject itself, it is enough for us to know, that the Prophet, as he had to deal with hypocrites, ridicules their superstition in their fastings, inasmuch as they thought that these were expiations by which their sins were blotted out, and that if they abstained for a day or two from meat and drink, God was thereby pacified.

And the Prophet's object is more evident from the next verse, when he says, *Are not these the words which Jehovah proclaimed by the former Prophets?* He confirms here his doctrine by many testimonies, that is, that God had already through successive ages exhorted the Jews to true repentance, and condemned their dissimulation, that they might

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not think that true religion was made up of fasting and of similar things. And this the Prophet did, not only to gain or secure to himself more credit, but also to render double the wickedness of the Jews; as though he had said, that they were apparently very anxious not to offend God, but that it was merely a false pretence; for had they from the heart wished to please God, they might have long ago learnt that fastings were of themselves of no moment, but that a beginning ought to be made with true religion and spiritual worship.

I have already mentioned, that possibly, when the question was raised by the captives, much disputing, as it is commonly the case, prevailed among the people. But as the Jews ever reverted to their old ways, being blindly attached to their frigid ceremonies, and thinking in this manner to propitiate God, the Prophet, for this reason, derides their preposterous labour and toil. "See," he says, "the only question now is, whether there should be fasting, as though this were the principal thing before God; in the meantime godliness is neglected, and neglected is real calling on God, and the whole of spiritual worship is also esteemed by you as nothing, and no integrity of life prevails: for ye bite one another, plunder one another, wrong one another, and are guilty of lying: ye heedlessly close your eyes to such vices as these; and at the same time when fasting is neglected, ye think that the whole of religion falls to the ground. These are your old ways, and such were commonly the thoughts and doings of your fathers; and it appears evident that ye trifle with God, and that ye are full of deceits, and that there is not in you a particle of true religion. For God formerly spoke loudly in your ears, and his words were not obscure when he exhorted you by his Prophets; he showed to you what true repentance was, but effected nothing. Is it not then quite evident that ye are now acting deceitfully, when ye so carefully enquire about fasting?" We now perceive what force there is in this sentence, *Are not these the words which Jehovah* formerly *proclaimed?* For it was not enough to remind the Jews of true repentance; but this reproof was needful, in order more

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sharply to stimulate them; and it was wholly necessary to discover their hypocrisy, that they might not be too much pleased with external performances.

That they might not then object, that what they asked respecting God's counsel was done with a good intention, the Prophet answers them, "Where are the words by which God had testified as to what can please him?" And for the same purpose he uses the word, קְרָא, *kora*, proclaimed: for he does not say, that God merely declared words by his Prophets, but that he uttered them loudly, and as it were with a full mouth. "See," he says, "ye enquire as though ye were in doubt, and that the knot could hardly be untied, and as though it were a matter of great moment. God has indeed not only spoken, but has also cried aloud in the ears of your fathers; in the meantime ye tread under foot his teaching, or pass it by with closed eyes." What does this mean? to enquire so anxiously about fasting, and at the same time to despise what is far more important? In a similar manner does Christ also condemn hypocrites, because they hesitated not to swallow a camel, while they were wont to strain at a gnat, (Mat. xxiii. 24;) for in trifling things they dared not to attempt anything; but as to gross wickedness, they leaped over it as it were with the audacity of wild beasts. The object then of the Prophet's words was to show that the Jews did not seriously and in earnest enquire respecting God's will, but pretended to be very attentive to religion, while they openly, and with gross and headless audacity, rejected the true doctrine, which was by no means ambiguous, as God had by his many Prophets clearly taught them and their fathers what he required from them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are so inclined to dissimulation, we may learn strictly to examine ourselves, and to descend into our own consciences, so that none of us may sleep in self-delusion, but be so displeased with our hidden vices, as in the meantime to aspire after, and with every care and labour, to attain true religion, and so strive to devote ourselves wholly to thee, that we may groan under the burden of our sins, and so suppli-

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antly flee to thy mercy, as at the same time to be touched with true penitence, until having at length put off the corruptions of our flesh, we shall be received into that purity which has been prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-seventh.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,[1] saying, *The judgment of truth judge, and kindness and mercies show, every one to his brother.* We have seen what the Prophet said of fasting, when messengers were sent by the exiles to enquire on the subject. It was a suitable opportunity for handling the question. For, as we then said, the people were so devoted to their ceremonies, as to think that the whole of religion consisted in fasting and in similar exercises. And as we are by nature prone to this evil, we ought carefully to consider what the Prophet has taught us—that fasting is not simply, or by itself, approved by God, but on account of the end designed by it. Having already shown to the Jews their error, in thinking that God could be pacified by ceremonies, he now reminds them of what God mainly requires in his law—that men should observe what is just and right towards one another. It is indeed true that the first part of the law refers to the service due to God; but it is a way which God has commonly adopted, to test the life of men by the duties of the second Table, and to show what this part of the law especially requires. God then in this passage, as in many others, does not commend righteousness towards men so as to depreciate godliness; for as this far excels everything in the whole world, so we know that in rightly forming the life, the beginning ought ever to be made by serving God aright. But as the Prophet had to do with hypocrites, he shows that they only trifled with God, while they made much of external things, and at the same time neglected uprightness, and the duties of love.

[1] Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* render the verb אמר here in the past tense—"Thus spake Jehovah of hosts;" and this seems right, as the reference is made to what the Lord had spoken by the former Prophets, as it appears from the 11th verse.—*Ed.*

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We now then understand the Prophet's object. He had said in the last lecture that he brought forward nothing new, but only reminded them of what had been taught by other Prophets; and here he pursues the same subject—that God made more account of uprightness and kindness than of those legal shadows, which in themselves were of no moment.

The judgment of truth, he says, *judge.* This could not have been extended indiscriminately to the whole people; but by these words the Prophet indirectly reproved the judges, because they committed plunder, either through favour or hatred, so that they decided cases not in a just and equitable manner. We then learn from the Prophet's words, that judgments were then given corruptly, so that the judge either decided in favour of a friend, or was bought by a price or a reward. As then there was no truth in the judgments given, but false pretences and colourings, the Prophet here exhorts them to execute *the judgment of truth,* that is, true judgment, when no respect of persons is shown, and when neither hatred nor favour prevails, but equity alone is regarded.

He then addresses the whole people in common, and says, *Show,* or exercise, *kindness and mercies*[1] *every one towards his brother.* He not only bids them to abstain from doing any wrong, but exhorts them to show kindness; for it would not be enough to do no harm to any one, except each of us were also solicitous to assist our neighbours; inasmuch as it is the dictate of benevolence to help the miserable when necessity so requires. But we must recollect that a part is given twice for the whole in what the Prophet says: in the first place, he refers only to the second Table of the law, while he includes in general the rule by which our life is to be formed; and in the second place, he enumerates not every thing contained in the second Table, but mentions only some things as instances. It is however certain, that his

[1] Rendered "kindness and mercy" by *Henderson,* but more correctly "mercy and compassion" by *Newcome;* or they may be rendered "mercy and sympathies." The meaning is, "Do acts of mercy and of compassions," or sympathies.—*Ed.*

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design was to show that men are greatly deceived when they seek to discharge their duties towards God by means of external rites and ceremonies; and farther, that it is a true and substantial evidence of piety, when any one observes what is just and equitable towards his neighbour. He afterwards adds—

10. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

10. Et viduam et pupillum, peregrinum et pauperem ne deripiatis, et vir malum fratris ne cogitatis in corde vestro, (*hoc est*, ne singuli vestrum cogitent in corde suo, *vel*, machinentur, malum fratribus suis.)

He mentions here some other duties, but for the same purpose of showing, that the fear of God is not proved by ceremonies, but by acting justly towards our brethren, and not by abstaining only from doing wrong, but by being ready to help the miserable. As widows, and orphans, and strangers are exposed as it were to plunder, Moses often in the law recommends them to favour, and shows that God cares for them, and will be their defender, when by one injured. So also the Prophet speaks here expressly of widows, and orphans, and strangers, that the Jews might understand, not only that they were to take heed, lest any one, being wronged, should complain, or lest any one should retaliate an injury, but that they were to observe integrity before God; for the ungodly are often terrified by fear, and refrain from doing mischief, because they know that there will be an avenger. Hence it comes that the rich and the opulent are safe from all injuries, because they are surrounded and fortified by strong defences; but the widows and the orphans are not thus able to repel wrongs. This is the reason why the Prophet prefers here to mention widows, and orphans, and strangers, rather than to speak indiscriminately of all the people. For the import of the whole is, as I have reminded you, that the fear of God is not really proved, except when a person cleaves to what is just and right, and is not restrained by fear or shame, but discharges his duty as it were in the presence of God and of his angels, so that he shows favour to the poor and miserable, who are without any to help them. But as I have elsewhere ex-

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plained this subject more at large, it is enough now briefly to touch on it.[1] Let us proceed—

11. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12. Yea, they made their hearts *as* an adamant-stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

11. Et renuerunt attendere, et posuerunt humerum declinationis, et aures suas aggravarunt ne audirent.

12. Et cor suum posuerunt adamantem, ne audirent verba quæ miserat Iehova exercituum in Spiritu suo, in manu prophetarum superiorum; et fuit ira magna à Iehova exercituum.

The Prophet here, by referring to the fathers, more sharply reproves the Jews of his age; for he saw that they differed but little from their fathers. The sum of what he says is, that the Jews in all ages dealt unfaithfully and perversely with God; for how much soever they boasted of their care and zeal for religion, they yet sought to satisfy God only with vain trifles. This then was the Prophet's object. For it is certain that there ever had been some pretence to religion in that nation, but it was mere dissimulation, for they were in the mean time intent on their ceremonies, and when God seriously remonstrated with them, their obstinacy and perverseness, before concealed, instantly appeared.

He therefore says, that they *refused to hear*. He does not now accuse the dead, except for this purpose, to teach the people of his age. He saw that they were solicitous about fasting at appointed seasons, while at the same time they regarded almost as nothing the main requirements of

[1] There is one sentence passed by unnoticed, rendered thus by *Newcome*,—

Neither imagine in your heart
Every man evil against his brother.

Verbatim it is—

And the evil of (or, evil to) man, his brother,
Devise ye not in your heart.

They were not to devise or contrive in their hearts any evil or wrong to man, he being a brother. This sense is given in the *Targum*, and by *Grotius*, *Henry*, and others; but *Henderson*, following the *Septuagint*, gives another meaning; and his version or rather paraphrase is—

And think not in your heart of the injury
Which one hath done to another.

But the original can hardly admit of such a construction: the former, no doubt, is the true meaning.—*Ed.*

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the law, even mercy, and justice, and uprightness. These are indeed the three things which Christ mentions. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) He then intimates that this doctrine was not new, and that their fathers had been sufficiently warned and instructed, but that they wilfully, and as it were designedly rebelled against God. In short, he pulls off their mask of ignorance; for as men for the most part seek to extenuate their sins by the plea, that they had not been clearly or seasonably taught, the Prophet declares that there was not any excuse of this kind, because they had been refractory and untameable, they had *refused to hear.*

To set forth more fully this perverseness, he afterwards says, that the *shoulder of withdrawing* had been presented by them. The Hebrews say that men serve with the shoulder, when they are submissive, and tractable, and willingly undergo the burden laid on them, according to what we have seen in Zeph. chap. iii. The Prophet now, on the contrary, says that the Jews had a refractory shoulder, as they refused to bear the yoke, but shook off every fear of God. The reason for the metaphor is this—that as burdens are carried on the shoulder, so the Lord lays the law on our shoulders, that the flesh may not lasciviate at pleasure, but be kept under restraint. He hence says, that they had presented a rebellious shoulder. The word סֹרֶרֶת, *sarret*, is properly rendered declining; but some render it perverse, and others contumacious: since the meaning is the same, I contend not about the word. It is enough to know that the contumacy of the Jews is what is here condemned; for they had been wholly unteachable, and had refused to submit to God and to his word.[1]

[1] And withdraw the shoulder,— *Newcome.*

He adds, "The line occurs in Neh. ix. 29. The metaphor is taken from beasts that decline the yoke. See Hos. iv. 16."

And turned their back rebelliously,—*Henderson.*

He observes that "to turn the shoulder is equivalent to turning the back upon any one. The cause of such action is traced to a refractory, rebellious, and intractable disposition."

Literally it is—

And gave (or presented) the shoulder of turning away.

It is a metaphor taken, as some say, from refractory children or servants, who being admonished, despise and reject what is commanded them, as

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He afterwards mentions their ears, *They made heavy their ears, lest they should hear.* In short, the Prophet sought by all means to prove the Jews guilty, that they might not adduce anything to extenuate their sin: for they had in every way, with the most determined wickedness, refused to obey God, when his teaching was sufficiently clear and intelligible.

He then comes to the heart, *They made*, he says, *their heart adamant*, or the very hardest stone. Some render it steel, and others flint. It means sometimes a thorn; but in this place, as in Ezek. iii. 9, and in Jer. xvii. 1, it is to be taken for adamant, or the hardest stone.[1] We now see that the Prophet's object was to show that the Jews had no excuse, as if they had fallen away through error or ignorance, but had ever wilfully and perversely rejected sound doctrine. The Prophet then teaches us that hypocrisy had been the sole hinderance to prevent them from understanding and following what was right.

But it may be useful to notice the manner of speaking which the Prophet adopts in condemning the perverseness of the Jews, when he says, that they had refused attention to God. For we ought here to observe the connection between the fear of God and obedience, and on the other hand, between the contempt of the law and wilful rebellion. If then we would not be condemned for contumacy before God, attention must in the first place be given to his word, and afterwards the shoulders must be put under, so that we

Drusius observes, by turning their backs. This is the most suitable view according to the context. Non-attendance to God's word, and not insubordination, is the subject. They refused to hear, turned their backs, and pretended deafness, or conducted themselves as though they were deaf. Then the source of this conduct is mentioned; the heart was made as hard as adamant, so that they would not *hear* the law and the words sent by the Prophets. The want of attention is throughout the subject; and the evident fact is first referred to, in the various ways in which it displayed itself; and then it is traced up to an adamantine heart. This is often the way in which things are stated by the Prophets—the most palpable acts are first stated, then the most hidden principles.—*Ed.*

[1] It occurs in this sense only here and in the two places referred to. *Jerome* says that it is a stone which breaks every metal, and can be broken by none; and that hence in Greek it is rendered ἀδαμας, which means unconquerable.—*Ed.*

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may bear submissively the yoke laid on us; and thirdly, we must listen with the ears, so that the word of God, preached to us, may not be lost, but strike in us deep roots; and lastly, our hearts must be turned to obedience, and all hardness corrected or softened. Then Zechariah adds, that the Jews had a stony or an iron heart, so that they repudiated the law of God and all his Prophets. He gives the first place to the law, for they ought to have sought from it the whole doctrine of religion; and the Prophets, as it has been often stated, were only interpreters of the law.

He afterwards mentions *the words* which had been *sent by Jehovah through his Spirit and through his Prophets.*[1] By saying that God spoke by his Prophets, he meets an objection by which hypocrites are wont to cover themselves, when they reject the truth. For they object and say, that they would be willingly submissive to God, but that they cannot bear the authority of men, as though God's word changed its nature by coming through the mouth of man. But as hypocrites and profane men are wont to lessen the authority of the word, the Prophet here shows, having this pretext in view, that God designed to be heard, though he employed ministers. Hence by this kind of concession it is implied, that Prophets are middle persons, and yet that God so speaks by their mouth, that contempt is offered to him when no due honour is shown to the truth. And further, lest the baseness of men should withhold regard from the word, he mentions also the *Spirit*, as though he had said, that God had spoken not only by his servants, even mortal men, but also by his Spirit. There is then no reason for hypocrites deceitfully to excuse themselves, by saying, that they rebel not against God, when they depreciate his Prophets; for the power and majesty of the Holy Spirit appear and shine forth in the doctrine itself, so that the condition of men takes nothing away from its authority. This part was also added in order to condemn the Jews, because they had from the

[1] Literally it is, "By his Spirit, by the hand of the former Prophets." *Henderson* justly remarks, "The double agency by which the divine will was communicated is recognised—that of the inspiring Spirit and that of the instruments inspired."—*Ed.*

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very beginning been seasonably warned, and it was only their own fault that they did not repent. For if the Lord had allowed them for a long time to go astray, there would have been some pretence for their evasions: but since God had tried to recall them to the right way, and Prophets, one after another, had been continually sent to them, their unfaithfulness, yea their iron perverseness, in obstinately refusing to obey God, was more fully discovered. This is the reason why Zechariah mentions here the former Prophets.

He then adds, that *there was great wrath from Jehovah of hosts;* by which sentence he reminded them, that it was no matter of dispute, as in case of a doubtful thing, whether their fathers had been wicked and disobedient to God; for he had sufficiently proved by punishments that he abominated their conduct; for this principle is to be held true —that God does not deal unjustly with men when he chastises them, but that the demerit of crimes is to be estimated by the punishment which he inflicts. As then God had so severely chastised the ancient people, the natural conclusion is, that their wickedness had become intolerable. We now then see why the Prophet said that there had been *great wrath from* God; the reason was, that the Jews might not think that he had been lightly offended, as he had not been satisfied with a moderate punishment; for since his wrath had been so great, and since he had in so dreadful a manner punished the sins of the people, it follows, that their wickedness had been more grievous than what men considered it to have been.

There is also here an implied comparison; for the unfaithfulness of those who then lived was the worse, for this reason —because they took no warning from the calamities of their fathers, so as to deal with more sincerity with God. They knew that their fathers had been carefully and in various ways admonished; they knew that exile followed, which was an evidence of the dreadful vengeance of God. As then they were like their fathers, and had not put off their perverse disposition, they proved themselves guilty of greater and more refractory baseness, for they ought to have been influenced at least by fear, when they saw that God's judgment

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had been so dreadful against obstinate men. It afterwards follows—

13. Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts.

13. Et fuit, sicuti clamavit et non audierunt, sic clamabunt et non audiam, dicit Iehova exercituum.

The Prophet sets forth more fully the dreadfulness of this punishment—that they in vain groaned and complained, for God was deaf to their complaints and cryings. When God in some measure fulminates and becomes soon reconciled, he does not seem to be greatly incensed, but when the miserable whom he afflicts by his hand, avail nothing by their entreaties and prayers, it then appears evident that God is in no common degree offended. This then is what the Prophet meant by saying, that they were not *heard* by God when they cried.

But we must notice what is said of their perverseness; for he says, that God had called, and that he was not heard by them. Now it cannot be deemed an unjust reward, that God should punish the contempt of his word; for how great is the honour by which he favours miserable wretches, when he invites them to himself, and most expressly invites them? When, therefore, the calling of God is thus rejected and despised, do not they who are so refractory deserve what the Prophet declares here—that they would have to cry in vain, as God would be deaf to their groanings?

As to the words, the change of person may embarrass the unlettered, but it is a mode of speaking common to the Prophets, for they assume the person of God in order to gain more authority to their doctrine; and they spoke sometimes in the third and sometimes in the first person: when in the first God himself speaks, and when in the third it is in the character of ministers, who declare and deliver, as it were from hand to hand, what had been committed to them by God. Hence the Prophet in the first clause speaks as God's minister; he afterwards assumes his person, as though he were God himself. But this, as it has been said, was done with regard to the word delivered. *It was, that as he*

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called and they heard not, &c. Who called? It is not right to apply this, as some do, to the Prophet; he, therefore, charges here the Jews, no doubt, with the sin of turning a deaf ear to God's word. *So*, he says, *they shall call, and I will not hear.* It might have been said, "so they shall call, and the Lord will not hear." There is in the meaning, as we see, nothing obscure or ambiguous.[1]

The import of the whole then is, that God had not threatened in vain by his ancient Prophets; but that as he had denounced vengeance by the mouth of Isaiah, so it had been executed on the Jews, for they had without effect cried, and found God a severe judge, whose voice they had previously despised. We indeed know, that it is a truth often repeated, that the ungodly are not heard by God; nay, that their prayers are abominable; for they profane God's name by an impure heart and mouth whenever they flee to him, as they approach him without faith and repentance. We then learn from these words, that those who perversely despise God's word deservedly rot in their own calamities; for it is by no means right or reasonable that the Lord should be ready to hear the crying of those who turn a deaf ear to his voice. It follows—

[1] The verse may be thus literally rendered—

13. And it was, as he had called, and they heard not,
So "call shall they do, and I will not hear,"
Said Jehovah of hosts.

The Prophet relates what Jehovah had said when the Jews refused to hear him. The verb אמר here, as in a former instance, is to be rendered in the past tense. It is improperly rendered "saith" in our version, and also by *Newcome* and *Henderson*. The past tense is observed by *Marckius*. Then the beginning of the following verse is a continuation of what Jehovah had said—

14. "And I will drive them as by a whirlwind
Among all the nations whom they know not;"
And the land became desolate after them,
Without a passenger and without an inhabitant;
Yea, they made the land of delight a desolation.

The two first lines are literally thus—

"And I will whirlwind them
Over all the nations whom they know not."

In the three last lines the Prophet states what the effect had been.

Newcome says, that ם, "them," after "know," is redundant. It is an instance of two pronouns, relative and personal, "whom they knew them not." It is the same in Welsh, "Y rhai nad adwaenant hwynt."—*Ed.*

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14. But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not: thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned; for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

14. Et affligar cum illis (*vertunt quidam*) super omnes gentes, (*alii melius*, dispellam illos ad omnes gentes,) quas non noverunt; (*alii vertunt*, quæ non noverunt eos;) et terra desolata erit post eos, ne sit transiens, nec revertens; et posuerunt terram desiderabilem in vastitatem.

Here the Prophet concludes what he had been speaking of God's vengeance, by which he had fully proved, that the sins of that nation had arrived to such a pitch, that there was no room for pardon. Hence he says, that they had been *dispersed;* for so I prefer to render the word, and the context seems to require this. Interpreters vary as to its meaning; and, indeed, the Hebrews themselves say, that this is a difficult passage, for, according to the rules of grammar, the word can hardly be made suitable to the context. But let us first see what the Prophet treats of; and, secondly, what meaning, as the word signifies various things, is the most suitable.

The Prophet no doubt refers here to God's vengeance, as evidenced by the dispersion of the Jews among many nations, not only when they were driven into exile, but also when scattered in various parts of the world. The verb, taken transitively, is by no means doubtful in its meaning, for סער, *sor*, means to move one from a place, or to expel, and that by force, inasmuch as it is derived from whirlwind. As it may therefore be here a transitive verb, I see no reason why we should seek other meanings at variance with the design and object of the Prophet. He then says, that the Jews had been *dispersed*—how? *among all nations*, that is, through all parts of the world; and then *among unknown nations*. Now we know, that the farther the exile, the more severe it is, for neighbours for the most part are the most humane; and when one is removed far to a barbarous nation, he would rather a hundred times to die on his journey than to live at a great distance from his country, and among a people of new and strange habits. The meaning is, that the Jews had been severely visited by God, not only because they had departed from his true worship and holy fear, but because they had been perverse, had rejected all sound doctrine, and had been deaf and indifferent to all

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admonitions. It was then for this reason that they had been *dispersed among all nations.*

He afterwards adds, that *the land after them became desolate* that no one passed through it. This circumstance also, that God devoted the land to desolation, proved more fully his wrath: for when God imprints marks of his vengeance on the land, and on other harmless things, necessary for man's support, it becomes evident that he is not lightly displeased with men. He then intimates, that God was not satisfied with the exile and dispersion of that people, but that he intended that there should be also visible marks of their wickedness in the sterility and desolation of the land itself: and that land, we know, was very fruitful, both by nature and by God's blessing; for he had promised to give to the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey. When this fruitfulness was turned to sterility, such a change ought to have roused the minds of all to consider the dreadful judgment of God. We now then see why the Prophet says, that *the land after them,* that is, after their departure, *became desolate;* for they had polluted the land so far as to constrain it, though innocent, to bear the judgment of God.

And he says further, that *the desirable land became a waste,* even through their fault. God was indeed the author of that waste, but Zechariah imputes this calamity to the people, because they had provoked God's wrath, and procured this evil for themselves; yea, they had involved the land itself as it were in the same guilt, for it was cursed by God, though they had been driven hence to another country. Desirable land was a name often given to Judea, not only on account of its fruitfulness, and the abundance of its produce, but because God had chosen it for himself: for though that land excelled other lands in many respects, it is yet certain that its chief excellency consisted in this,—that God honoured it with peculiar favour.

Zechariah then condemns the Jews, not only because they had by their own fault extinguished the favour as to the produce of the land, but because they had corrupted the land itself, which had been so singularly favoured as to have become the habitation of God. And hence we more fully learn

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how great was the enormity of their sins, which caused God to devote to desolation a land chosen by himself; for, as we have said, it was no common honour for that land, in which God designed to be worshipped by his chosen and holy people, to have been destined by him to be made like Paradise. But when such an honour was turned to shame and perpetual reproach, it was clearly a remarkable sign of God's wrath: and hence also becomes evident the impiety of that people who, as it had been said, turned aside God's favour from the land, that not only it did not bring forth its usual produce, but that it also became, as it were, a disgraceful spectacle, and filled all with horror on seeing it so desolate, where was previously seen the temple and the worship of God.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast adopted us for this end, that we may show brotherly kindness one towards another, and labour for our mutual benefit,—O grant, that we may prove by the whole tenor of our life, that we have not been called in vain by thee, but that we may so live in harmony with each other, that integrity and innocency may prevail among us; and may we so strive to benefit one another, that thy name may be thus glorified by us, until having at length finished our course, we reach the goal which thou hast set before us, that having at last gone through all the evils of this life, we may come to that blessed rest which has been prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord.—Amen

CHAPTER VIII

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-eighth.

1. Again the word of the Lord of hosts came *to me*, saying,
2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

1. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ exercituum, dicendo,—
2. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Zelatus sum pro Sion zelo magno (*vel*, æmulatione magna,) et indignatione magna æmulatus sum pro ea (*vel*, zelatus sum.)

Some think that at the beginning of this chapter the people are reproved for their unfaithfulness, because they

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conducted themselves towards God in a way they ought not to have done, as they had violated that sacred marriage which God had been pleased to contract with them; for it is a common mode of speaking for God to compare himself to jealous husbands, when he sees his Church dealing with him unfaithfully. But this meaning is inadmissible: for the verb קָנָא, *kona*, connected as it is here, is to be taken in a good sense, as signifying concern or affection, inasmuch as ל, *lamed*, means, "on account of," or "for;" and we have in the first chapter a similar sentence; and it is evident that in many other places the meaning is no other, but that God burned with wrath against all the enemies of his Church, as he regarded his Church with singular love. Emulation then here does not mean jealousy, but is to be taken in a different sense, as signifying that concern which God had for the protection of his Church. The whole then of this chapter proves that God would be the defender of his people, and that such was his care for the safety of all the godly, that he resolved to oppose the whole world, if necessary, for their protection. This is the sum of the whole.

He then says, that *the word of Jehovah came to him*;[1] we hence learn, that this was a distinct prophecy. He adds, *I have been zealous for Sion* (for as we have said, the letter ל, *lamed*, is to be thus taken) *with great zeal*.[2] This was indeed an incredible change, for God had for a time restrained himself, while the ungodly at their pleasure harassed the Church, so that they thought that they could do so with

[1] Many MSS. have אֵלַי, "to me," after "hosts," a reading confirmed by the *Targum*, *Syriac*, and the *Sept.* Barb. MS.; and it is no doubt the true one.—*Ed.*

[2] *Newcome* has followed our version. The rendering of *Henderson* is the same with that of *Calvin*,—

I have been zealous for Zion with great zeal.

The comparison is evidently what *Calvin* refers to above; it is the jealousy of a husband for the honour of his wife. *Blayney* has no good reason for saying that this verse refers to what was past, and the following to the state of things at that time; for the verbs in both instances are in the same tense, the perfect, which often includes the present, that is, the perfect up to the present time; as the future in Hebrew, and also in Welsh, includes the present as well as what is to come. If we say, "I have been jealous," &c., we must add in the next verse, "I have returned," &c. But it would be better in our language to use in both instances the present tense, "I am jealous," &c., and, "I am returned," &c.—*Ed.*

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impunity. As God then had for some time remained at rest, what the Prophet says here could not have been easily believed, that is, that God would, through a sudden jealousy, undertake the cause of the Church. Hence the indignation, immediately subjoined, must be regarded with reference to enemies, as though he had said, that all the ungodly would now perceive what they had by no means expected,—that God was the protector of Jerusalem. It now follows—

3. Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called, A city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, The holy mountain.

3. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Reversus sum ad Sion, et habitabo in medio Ierusalem; et vocabitur Ierusalem urbs veritatis; et mons Iehovæ exercituum, mons sanctitatis.

The Prophet now more clearly explains what he intended; but it was necessary to preserve this order—that enemies were to be by force ejected from their possession, and the Church delivered, before God could dwell in the midst of it; for how could God have proved that Jerusalem was under his guardianship and protection without having first subdued its enemies? It was not then without reason that the Prophet commenced with this promise—that God was prepared for war, and was burning with wrath, that he might deliver his Church from the hands of enemies. Then follows the fruit of the victory; for it would not have been enough for God to avenge the wrongs done to his chosen people, without gathering the dispersed and restoring the Church to its ancient condition. For it often happens that those who have been cruelly treated find an avenger; but no comfort, or very little comfort, comes to them, as they are made nothing better; but the Lord here refers to these two things—that he would take up arms to defend his chosen people, and also that he would become, as the case was, the defender and protector of the holy city.

The repetition of the sentence, *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts*, almost in every verse, was no doubt intended for the purpose of strengthening their faith; for it was, as I have already said, a thing incredible. It was then necessary to bring forward often the name of God, that the faithful might

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more readily give assent to the prophecy which they knew proceeded from God, even the God of hosts, whose power is infinite, and to whom nothing is difficult, as we shall find it presently stated.

And he says that he had *returned;* not that the accomplishment of this prophecy was then visible, but the decree is put for the reality. God had been, as it were, for a long time silent, while his people were exposed as a sport to their enemies; and he seemed then to be far away from Jerusalem, for the place was desolate and waste, yea, it was a scene of dreadful vengeance. God, then, during the whole of that time, seemed to have forsaken the place, according to the testimony of Ezekiel, who says, that God had removed from the temple, and that it was an empty place, and as it were profane. On this account he says now that he had returned; for he intended openly to show that it had not in vain been made the seat of his glory, when he had commanded his name to be there invoked. It is indeed true that mount Sion had never been forsaken by God; but no other opinion could have been formed, when there were there no altar, no sacrifices, and no people to worship God; for this is said with reference to divine worship; and the holiness of the mount was also nothing, except as far as God had consecrated it to himself. Hence these two things were connected—the holiness of the mount and the presence of God. It therefore follows that God, according to the judgment of men, was absent, when no religion appeared there, and the Jews offered there no sacrifices.

He further says, that he had *returned, that he might dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.*[1] It was necessary to add this, that the Jews might be convinced that his return was not in vain; for many said that they foolishly made too much haste, and that though the commencement had been favourable, yet many troubles would come upon them in future, and that their building would be only for a short time, and that though they spent much toil and labour in rebuilding the city, it would yet be only for a season, as their enemies

[1] "The walls of the city were not dedicated, Neh. xii. 27, till above sixty years after this prophecy."—*Newcome.*

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would shortly come and destroy their new edifices. Since then reports of this kind were spreading, it was necessary to support the minds of the godly, that they might be fully persuaded that God had returned to his people, and had become the restorer of his exiles for this end—that he might as before dwell at Jerusalem.

We now apprehend the Prophet's object; it was as though he had said, that the people had not returned in vain to their country, but that they had been delivered by the authority of God, and that his dwelling at Jerusalem would be fixed and perpetual, as it had before been his habitation. We indeed know that the stability of the Church is not otherwise secured than by the presence of God, as it is said in Psalm xlvi., "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;" for the Church would not be less exposed to sudden and frequent destruction than other things, were it not that God, her support, dwells in her. And this is what our Prophet means here when he says, that *God would dwell* there.

He adds, *And called shall be Jerusalem the city of truth, and the mount of Jehovah the mount of holiness.*[1] By the first clause the Prophet reminds us why God had for a time forsaken Jerusalem, even because it was a city given to falsehoods, wicked devices, deceits, and perverse counsels. As then the Jews had wholly degenerated from true religion, the Prophet intimates that the city became destitute of its guardian and protector, even of God himself. And for the same purpose are added the words, *the mount of Jehovah* shall be called *the mount of holiness.* For however proudly the Jews boasted that they worshipped God, they yet had profaned both the temple and the altar by their sins, as we have seen it proved by the Prophet Haggai. (Hag. ii. 15.) Here then Zechariah indirectly reproves the Jews for having corrupted all purity by their frauds, and also for having, by the defilements of their sins, polluted Sion and

[1] This verse presents an example of an inverted order in the words, often met with in Scripture. Zion and Jerusalem are first mentioned, then Jerusalem and Zion. "Truth" here seems especially to mean faithfulness, as opposed to perfidy; for Jerusalem had become unfaithful and broken her covenant with God. "Holiness" included what was moral and ceremonial.—*Ed.*

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the temple of God. At the same time he teaches us that God dwells in his Church when he sanctifies it.

Hence God is never idle while he dwells in his people; for he cleanses away every kind of impurity, every kind of deceit, that where he dwells may ever be a holy place. Therefore the Prophet not only promises here an external blessing to the Jews, but also shows that God performs what is far more excellent—that he cleanses the place where he intends to dwell, and the habitation which he chooses, and casts out every kind of filth. And since God promises to do this, we hence see that it is his own peculiar work and gift to cleanse all our impurities, and also to dissipate everything false and deceitful. The import of the whole is, that when God reconciles his people to himself, he not only brings an outward blessing of an earthly kind, but also something better and far more excellent, even the renewal of the heart and mind, and that when all things are polluted and filthy, he restores true and perfect cleanness and integrity.

We must further bear also in mind what I have already stated—that their sins are here intimated to the Jews, that they might be touched with shame, and seek repentance; for we have seen that they were very slow and tardy in this respect. It was then necessary to stimulate them that they might repent. For what the Prophet says clearly intimates that mount Sion had been profaned, though God had consecrated it to himself; for God's worship had been there vitiated, and there was there no integrity; and that the faithful city, such at least as it ought to have been, had become full of falsehood and treachery; for truth is not to be confined to that fidelity which men ought to observe one towards another, but is to be extended to that sincerity which the faithful ought to possess as to the pure and sincere worship of God. This is the sum of the whole. It now follows—

4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

4. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Adhuc habitabunt vetuli et vetulæ (*vel*, senes et anus, *sed* est idem nomen) in plateis Ierosolymæ, et viro baculus ejus in manu sua præ multitudine dierum.

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He confirms what we have already stated, that the Jews would be safe under the hand and protection of God, as he would dwell among them. The cause of a safe and quiet state he made to be the presence of God. For when we have peace with the whole world, we may yet disturb one another, except the God of peace restrains us; inasmuch as mutual and intestine discord may harass us, though we may be spared by external enemies. It is then necessary in the first place, that the God of peace and salvation should dwell in the midst of us. But when we have the presence of God, then comes full security. Suitably then does the Prophet now say, that *yet dwell* would *old men and old women in the midst of Jerusalem:* for since the time the Jews had returned, they had been harassed, we know, by continual wars; and it could hardly be expected that they could live long in a state of incessant troubles, while new fears were daily disturbing them. Since then they were thus in incessant and endless dangers, the Prophet gives them relief, and promises that there would be to them yet a quiet habitation, so that both men and women would live to extreme old age. Hence he says, *There shall yet dwell*, &c.

Then he adds, *a staff shall be to man for his age*, or on account of multitude of days. This seems indeed to have been said with no great propriety; for it would have been much better had vigour been given them, so that men failed not through old age. Hence the weakness mentioned here seems to have been a sign of God's curse rather than of his favour; and on this account the Lord promises by Isaiah, that old men would be vigorous and strong, (Is. lxv. 20;) so that they felt not the disadvantage of age. But the design of Zechariah, as we have already reminded you, was here different; for many by their daily complaints depressed the minds of the godly, declaring that they were deceived, and saying that Jerusalem would not long stand, as they were surrounded by so many enemies. Hence Zechariah shows, that the Jews would be in no danger of falling by the hand of enemies, as they would live securely without any external disturbances; for we know that many old men, half alive through age and supporting themselves by a staff, cannot

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be anywhere seen, except in a state of peace and quietness, undisturbed by enemies.[1]

We now then perceive the design of the Prophet, which was to show, that Jerusalem would be tranquil and in peace, and that this would be the fruit of God's presence; for its citizens would die through years, and not through the violence of eternal enemies. To the same purpose is what follows—

5. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.	5. Et plateæ urbis plenæ erunt pueris et puellis, ludentibus in plateis ejus.

He repeats and confirms the same thing by another representation—that boys and girls would play in the streets and on the public roads, which could not be during the troublous time of war; for when arms clatter, the sound of trumpets is heard, and assaults of enemies are dreaded, every one keeps his children at home, and in public there is sad confusion, and few are found abroad; in short there is no cheerfulness even in children when fear is hanging over them. We hence see, that what is here promised is a state of quietness to Jerusalem; for God would keep off the onsets of enemies—not that Jerusalem was ever exempt from all evils, but that God's defence was so effectual as to render them safe amidst many and various dangers.

It is not needful here anxiously to raise the question—Whether it is lawful to play during times of peace? for the Prophet here took his language from the common habits of men, and even from the very nature of things; for we know that men give way to cheerfulness when no fear lays hold on their minds, and that play and sport are allowed to children. The Prophet meant only this, that though the Jews might then have something to do with various enemies, they would yet be in a state of peace and safety. He afterwards adds—

[1] "Longevity and a numerous offspring were especially promised under the old dispensation, but uniformly in connection with obedience to the law. Deut. iv. 40; v. 16, 33; vi. 2; xxxiii. 6, 24; Is. lxv. 20."—*Henderson.*

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6. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts.

6. Sic dicit Iehovæ exercituum, Si mirabile est hoc in oculis reliquiarum populi hujus in diebus illis, etiam in oculis meis mirabile erit? dicit Iehova exercituum.

He sharply reproves here the lack of faith in the people; for as men are wont to measure whatever is promised by their own understanding, the door of entrance for these prophecies was nearly closed up when they saw that the fury of their enemies could by no means be pacified. They had indeed tried in various ways to check them, or at least to conciliate them; and we know that many edicts had been proclaimed in favour of the Jews by the kings of Persia; but such was the common hatred to them, that new enemies arose continually. On this account it is that the Prophet now blames their want of faith; and he points out, as by the finger, the source of their unbelief when he says, that they had no faith in God who spoke to them, because he promised more than what they could conceive to be possible. And this deserves notice, for if we wish to pull up unbelief by the roots from our hearts, we must begin at this point—to raise up our thoughts above the world; yea, to bid adieu to our own judgment, and simply to embrace what God promises; for his power ought to carry us up to such a height that we may entertain no doubt but that what seems to us impossible will surely be accomplished. What the Prophet calls "wonderful" is the same as impossible; for men often wonder at God's works without believing them, and even under the false pretence of wonder deny his power. Hence when God promises anything, doubts immediately creep in—"Can this be done?" If a reason does not appear, as the thing surpasses our comprehension, we instantly conclude that it cannot be. We thus see how men pretending to wonder at God's power entirely obliterate it.

When therefore the Prophet now says, *If this be wonderful in your eyes, shall it be so in mine?* it is the same as though he had said, "If you reject what I promise to you, because it is not in accordance with your judgment, is it right that my power should be confined to what you can comprehend?"

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We hence see that nothing is more preposterous than to seek to measure God's power by our own understanding. But he seems to say at the same time, that it is useful for us to raise upwards our minds, and to be so filled with wonder, while contemplating God's infinite power, that nothing afterwards may appear wonderful to us. We now perceive how it behoves us to wonder at God's works, and yet not to regard anything wonderful in them. There is no work of God so minute, but that it contains something wonderful, when it is considered as it ought to be; but yet when raised up by faith we apprehend the infinite power of God, which seems incredible to the understanding of the flesh, we look down as it were on the things below; for our faith ascends far above this world.

We now see the true source of unbelief and also of faith. The source of unbelief is this—when men confine God's power to their own understanding; and the source of faith is—when they ascribe to God the praise due to his infinite power, when they regard not what is easy, but being satisfied with his word alone they are fully persuaded that God is true, and that what he promises is certain, because he is able to fulfil it. So Paul teaches us, who says, that Abraham's faith was founded on this assurance—that he doubted not but that he who had spoken was able really to accomplish his word. (Rom. iv. 20.) Hence, that the promises of God may penetrate into our hearts and there strike deep roots, we must bid adieu to our own judgment; for while we are wise in ourselves and rely on earthly means, the power of God vanishes as it were from our sight, and his truth also at the same time disappears. In a word, we must regard, not what is probable, not what nature brings, not what is usual, but what God can do, what his infinite power can effect. We ought then to emerge from the confined compass of our flesh, and by faith, as we have said, ascend above the world.

And he says, *In the eyes of the remnant of this people*, &c. By this sentence he seems to touch the Jews to the quick, who had already in a measure experienced the power of God in their restoration; for thirty years before their freedom

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had been given them by Cyrus and Darius, they regarded as a fable what God had promised them; they said that they were in a grave from which no exit could have been expected: they had experienced how great and incredible was God's power; and yet as people astonished, they despaired of their future safety. This ingratitude then is what Zechariah now indirectly reproves by calling them the remnant of his people. They were a small number, they had not raised their banner to go forth against the will of their enemies; but a way had been suddenly opened to them beyond all expectation. Since then they had been taught by experience to know that God was able to do more than they could have imagined, the Prophet here justly condemns them for having formed so unworthy an idea of that power of God which had been found by experience to have been more than sufficient. He afterwards adds—

7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;

8. And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

7. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Ecce ego servans populum meum è terra orientis et è terra occasus solis;

8. Et reducam eos, et habitabunt in medio Ierosolymæ; et erunt mihi in populum, et ego ero illis in Deum, in veritate et justitia.

He pursues the same subject, and introduces a preface, very necessary in so confused a state of things; for it was very difficult to raise up desponding minds and to inspire them with confidence, when pressed down with fear and trembling. This is the reason why Zechariah repeats so often, that he declared nothing but God's commands only.

Behold, he says, *I will save*, or deliver *my people*. As dispersion took away hope, the Prophet restores it, and says, that it would not be difficult to gather the people from all parts of the world, when God stretched forth his hand; and emphatical is the expression, *I will deliver my people*. God then does here exalt himself, that we may learn to exalt his power, and not to judge of it according to our own comprehension. *I will deliver my people*, he says, *from the rising as well as from the setting of the sun*. This sentence then

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is connected with the preceding, in which the Prophet briefly shows that the Jews erred and acted perversely, when they ascribed no more to God than what the judgment of their own flesh dictated, or what seemed probable according to the course of nature. As then he had taught them that great wrong is done to God except he is separated from men, and shines eminent above the whole world, he now adds, that God, with whom nothing is wonderful or difficult, had resolved to gather his people, and from their dispersion to restore them again to Jerusalem. The Prophet then says here nothing new, but rightly applies what he had just said of God's infinite and incomprehensible power, which men absurdly attempt to inclose in their own brains, and to attach to earthly instrumentalities.

He then adds, *I will restore them, and they shall dwell,* he says, *in the midst of Jerusalem.* He again confirms what I have already stated,—that their return would not be in vain, though many said, that the Jews had done foolishly in having returned so quickly into their own country; and they condemned their determination, as though they had been suddenly carried away by extreme ardour. Hence the Prophet, in order to show that God had dealt faithfully with his people, promises them here a safe and a perpetual habitation at Jerusalem. *They shall dwell,* he says; that is, "As you now see that you have been gathered, so expect that God will be your protector, so as to render you safe, and to make Jerusalem to be again inhabited, as it had been formerly."

He afterwards adds, *They shall be to me for a people, and I shall be to them for a God.* By these words the Prophet confirms what he has hitherto taught, when he now speaks of the renewal of the covenant; for the whole hope of the people depended on this one thing,—that God remembered the covenant which he had made with them. This covenant had indeed been broken, according to the usual language of Scripture; for the people, when removed into exile, thought that they were cast away and forsaken by God. As then the memory of this covenant had been buried as to the effect, or as they say, apparently, the Prophet, in order to confirm

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what he has already said, expressly declares, that they would be God's people, and that he would be their God. We now then understand why he adds, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

In the last place he says, *in truth and righteousness;* that is, "settled and permanent shall be this felicity:" for when God shows that he cares for his people, then follow outward blessings, which are evidences of his favour. The Prophet adds, that this shall be in truth and righteousness; for God will not be propitious and kind to his people only for a short time, but will continue his favour to them to the end. As then God intended to establish the safety of the city, he testifies that he would be its God *in righteousness*, even in sincerity, in good faith, and without dissimulation, and also without any danger of changing.[1] And how this was to be fulfilled we shall hereafter see.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that though we daily depart from thee by our sins, we may not yet be wholly removed from the foundation on which our salvation depends; but do thou so sustain us, or even raise us up when fallen, that we may ever continue in our degree, and also return to thee in true repentance; and whatever may happen to us, may we learn ever to look to thee, that we may never despair of thy goodness, which thou hast promised to be firm and perpetual, and that especially while relying on thy only-begotten Son our Mediator, we may be able to call on thee as our Father, until we shall at length come to that eternal inheritance, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only Son.—Amen.

[1] *Blayney* and *Henderson* consider these words, "truth" and "righteousness," as belonging equally to the two foregoing sentences, as applying to the people as well as to God. But they seem more properly to belong to God, as truth connected with righteousness refers to his faithfulness, confirmed by his justice in the performance of his promise. God is true or faithful, and further, he is righteous or just, so that what he has promised will surely be fulfilled. See 1 John i. 9.—*Ed.*

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Lecture One Hundred and Forty-ninth.

9. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which *were* in the day *that* the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.

10. For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither *was there any* peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour.

11. But now I *will* not *be* unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts.

9. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Roborentur manus vestræ, qui auditis in diebus his verba hæc ex ore Prophetarum, qui (*fuerunt*) in die quo fundata est domus Iehovæ exercituum, et templum extrueretur.

10. Quia ante dies istos merces hominis non fuit, et merces jumenti nulla, et egredienti et venienti nulla pax ab angustia (*vel*, præ afflictione,) et emisi cunctos homines, quemque in socium suum.

11. At nunc non secundum dies superiores ego (*agam*) cum reliquiis populi hujus (*agam non est in contextu, sed supplendum est,*) dicit Iehova exercituum.

THE Prophet having taught us that God was reconciled to his people, does now seasonably exhort the Jews to prepare themselves for work and strenuously to exert themselves in erecting the temple, and also in building the city: for as we have stated, many were then become slothful, as they thought that they were soon to be destroyed by their enemies, and that what they built with great labour, toil, and expense, would be presently demolished. Hence it was that sloth had crept in, so that many had left off the building both of the temple and of the city: and we have also seen elsewhere, that they were too intent on building their own houses, and at the same time neglected the temple; for each looked to his own private advantage, and also to his own pleasures. The Prophet Haggai sharply reproved this indifference, (Hag. i. 4;) and the Lord clearly showed that he had punished this their sloth; for they preferred their own houses to the temple, and through want of faith trembled, as though their restoration was a mockery. As then the people by their ingratitude had almost wiped away the recollection of their deliverance, the Prophet Haggai severely reproved them; and Zechariah now touches on the same subject.

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Hence he says, that before they had begun the work of building the temple, the land was sterile, as though it was cursed by God, and that they were deprived of their hope, and that whatever they attempted proved useless; but that after they had begun, through the encouragement given them by the Prophets, to take courage to build the temple, things changed for the better, and that openly, so that it was easy to conclude, that God had been previously displeased with them, but that now he was favourable, as all things went on prosperously. This change then was a clear token both of God's displeasure and of God's favour; for he had justly chastised his people as long as they were under the influence of unbelief, so as not to proceed with the work of building the temple; and afterwards the favour of God had begun to shine on them, as God gave them abundance of provisions, and proved in various ways that he was now favourable to them. Zechariah therefore mentions these things, that they might proceed more cheerfully with their work, and not provoke God's wrath, which they had previously found to have been so much to their loss, and that they might seek to enjoy his blessing, which was now so manifest before their eyes. This is the import of the whole.

He says, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, *Strengthened let be your hands.* He exhorts them to perseverance: but as men become weak, and many things occur which enfeeble or break down their courage, he uses the word, strengthen; for it is often necessary to gather new strength, and to confirm a pious resolution. Let us now then learn to apply this doctrine to our own benefit, and let us understand what experience sufficiently teaches us, even this—that our hands, though at first well prepared, are yet soon relaxed, and as it were loosed, and even entirely fail, unless new strength be now and then attained; and that this is effected when we are animated by God's word, and rise superior to the trials which enfeeble us. And Zechariah will presently inform us whence this strength was to be sought, even from the promises which they had already heard from the Prophets; for he would have in vain exhorted them to persevere, had not the ground of confidence been mentioned. For when God is silent, our

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minds, though before abundantly ready and willing, must languish, and at length wholly fail.

We then see that there can be no courage in men, unless God supports them by his word, so that they may recover their lost strength and regain their alacrity. Had the Prophet only bidden them to take courage, they might have replied, that there was nothing in their circumstances to encourage them; but when the word of God was set before them, every excuse was taken away; and they were now to gird up the loins, and boldly to fight, inasmuch as God supplied them with weapons.

Be strong, he says, *ye who hear in these days these words from the mouth of the Prophets.* Though Zechariah is not often concise in his words, but in many parts diffuse, yet he is so here, and the whole verse is very emphatical; for after having said that they were not destitute of God's promises, he adds, "in these days," and also "these words." He intimates that they were not only taught a general truth, that they were to render obedience, but that God himself would be their leader to direct their steps and to show them the way: in a word, he omits nothing to enable them to proceed without difficulty with the work which they had begun. There is then an emphasis intended by the demonstratives, "these," "these;" for the Prophet intimates that God was continually speaking to them, and that he announced not only a general truth, but specific words, by which they might guide their feet and their hands in every action. And he says, that those words were heard from the mouth of the Prophets, for God intended honour to be done to his servants; and it is, as it has been often stated, a true test of faith, when God descends not himself from heaven, or does not appear to us in a visible form, but makes use of men as his ministers. Yet Zechariah briefly intimates, that the Prophets are not the authors of the promises, which are necessary to raise up, support, and stimulate our minds; for the Lord only employs their service; and this is what he means by the word *mouth.*

He now adds, *Who* were *in that day in which was founded the house of Jehovah, in order to build the temple.* Not much

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time had elapsed since they had begun again to build the temple, and the foundations had been laid; but the work had been discontinued through the unbelief of them all, and also through the private regard of each to his own interest. For as they were in suspense and doubtful, there arose sloth and indifference, and avarice possessed them, so that they despised the temple of God. But he says now that during that short time God often spoke to them by his Prophets with the view of correcting their delay and tardiness, for the Prophet mentions here as it were but one day, for the purpose of expressing how short the time had been. Less excusable then was their sloth, since God daily spoke to them, and confirmed by new Prophets what the former ones had said.[1]

It follows, *For before these days there was no hire for man, and no hire for beast, no peace to passengers, because I had sent forth all men, each one against his friend.* The Prophet mentions here, as I have already said, evidences of God's curse, by which the Jews might have learnt that he was displeased with their neglect in disregarding the building of the temple, for while omitting that they paid attention to their domestic affairs. He therefore reminds them of what might have made them to fear, lest they should go on still to provoke God; for they had been taught, to their great loss, not to excite in this manner his displeasure: and Zechariah, no doubt, as well as Haggai and Malachi, had often addressed the people on this subject; for we see how prone is the disposition of us all to relapse into forgetfulness when God in any measure relaxes in his discipline. We presently shake off every fear when exempt from evils. This is the reason why it is needful for us to be often reminded

[1] The verse may be thus rendered—

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
Strengthened be your hands,
Who hear in these days
Those very words from the mouth of the Prophets,
Which *ye heard* in the day of founding the house
Of Jehovah of Hosts, the temple, that it might be built.

As in a former instance, ch. ii. 4, אֵלֶּה, repeated, should be rendered "these" and "those." *Blayney* borrows after "which" the verb "ye heard," from the former line; but *Henderson* considers דִּבְּרוּ to be understood, "which were spoken." The former is the most obvious.—*Ed.*

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of those judgments of God which we have experienced, according to what is done here by Zechariah.

Before these days, he says, *there was no hire for man, and no hire for beast;* that is, there was no profit from the labour of men or of beasts. He takes it as granted, that men were not tardy in their work, and that beasts performed their labours, but that no fruit appeared. And whence was it the labour of men and of beasts was unprofitable, except from God's curse, as the law testifies? (Deut. xxviii. 8.) For when the Prophets speak of God's curse they refer to the law, and only apply to their present purpose what is stated generally in the law. As then God declares in the law that he will bless the work of the hands, Zechariah draws this inference —that God was displeased when men and beasts toiled laboriously without any advantage.

He then adds, *There was no peace.* When men labour in vain, thirst and want of all things must follow; for though the labour of man, we know, is of itself of no value, yet when blessed by God it is the means of promoting fertility, so that the earth may supply us with food. On the other hand, when the labour of man is barren, even the earth itself refuses to bring forth fruit. It was then no light calamity when God visited the people with poverty and famine. But another evil is added, no less dreadful and even more grievous— that the land was so harassed by enemies that no travelling was safe. Hence he says, that *there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in;* that is, there was no free or peaceable travelling, but they were exposed to pillage and plunder. In a word, Zechariah teaches us here, that the Jews were under a curse both within and without, for the land disappointed those who cultivated it, as it yielded no fruit, and then they were exposed to hostile assaults.

With regard to the words, מִן הַצָּר, *men etsar*, some render them, on account of distress, "there was no peace on account of distress." But we may retain the proper meaning of the preposition מִן, *men*, "there was no peace from distress;" that is, there were none safe from inconvenience and molestation.[1]

[1] *Calvin* has in this instance followed the *Septuagint*, and so has *New-*

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The reason is added, *Because God had sent forth all men, each one against his neighbour.* The Prophet designedly subjoined this, that the Jews might know that these evils could not be ascribed to fortune, as though men did rise up thoughtlessly one against another. Hence he reminds them that their quietness was disturbed by the just and hidden judgment of God, for he can turn as he pleases the hearts of men; he now inclines them to humanity or to mercy, and then he turns them to madness and ferocity. That the Jews might know that they had to do with God, the Prophet declares here that men had been sent forth, that they might mutually rage and assault one another.

Hence they who use the word permit, not only take away from what the Prophet means, but wholly pervert his doctrine and extinguish its light altogether: for God does not say here that he was still when the Jews ill-treated one another; but he meant to have this attributed to his judgment. For when almost the whole world was hostile to a few men, and those related to one another, they ought surely to have been united among themselves; for necessity conciliates even the most alienated, and even pacifies those who have been previously the most violent enemies. Since, then, the Jews were assailed by foreign enemies, they ought to have

come; but the *Targum* has "propter hostem—on account of the enemy;" and the same is the most common meaning of the Hebrew; and such is the rendering of *Drusius, Marckius, Dathius,* and *Henderson.* We may give this literal version of the whole verse,—

10. For before those days,
The hire of man, it was nothing;
And the hire of beast, not any;
And to the goer and the comer,
No peace from the enemy;
And I sent forth every man,
Each one against his neighbour.

The word צר is perhaps more strictly an oppressor than an enemy, though it be often rendered by the latter word. The verb means to straiten, to confine, and thus to distress, to afflict, or to oppress. Not a foreign but a domestic enemy is here meant, as intimated in the two last lines. The "sending forth" shows that these enemies were robbers; and this is also evident from the statement that "goers" and "comers" were not safe. Hence our version and that of *Newcome* are wrong, in which "I set" is found instead of "I sent forth," the proper meaning of the verb used here. "I sent" of *Henderson* is not quite correct, for the idea is not fully expressed.—*Ed.*

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been friends among themselves, or at least to have been so softened as not to be so hostile towards one another. As then they raged against their own bowels, so that no one spared his own friends, God more fully shows by this circumstance that he was the author of these confusions. And how God kindles the hearts of men to ferocity, and is yet free from all blame, has been explained elsewhere. God indeed executes his righteous judgments, when he sets men one against the other; and if we inquire into the cause and the end, we shall find that men are in this way justly punished. As then in God's judgments there ever shines forth the highest equity, there is no reason for men to try to implicate him in their own perdition, or to devolve on him a part of the blame. God then justly excites the hearts of men into madness, and yet men themselves bear the whole blame, though God draws them here and there against their will, and makes use of them as his instruments; for the hidden purpose of God does not excuse them, while nothing is less their object than to obey his word, though they are guided by his hidden operation. We know that no work pleases God, but when there is a willing obedience, which none of the reprobate ever render; and we also know that all works are to be judged according to the end designed. We must therefore consider what was the reason that God thus set men against one another, and what end he had in view. But we have elsewhere discussed this subject at large.

Let us then now, in short, bear this in mind, that the Jews mutually harassed and distressed one another, not by chance, but because the Lord, who was their enemy and whose wrath they had provoked, had sent them forth as enemies among themselves.

He afterwards adds, *But now, not according to former days, shall I be to the remnant of this people, saith Jehovah of hosts.* Zechariah now reminds them that things had changed for the better, as it was evident that God was propitious to them. And if the cause of this change be asked, the answer is, the building of the temple. If nothing had been said by the Prophets, the Jews might have only con-

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jectured, but every doubt had been removed; for God had threatened them with punishment which he afterwards inflicted, and then he exhorted them to repentance, and said that he would be reconciled to them: when the Jews rightly considered these things, they had no need of having recourse to conjectures. It was indeed fully evident that God regarded them with favour, and that the fruits of his favour were before their eyes; and they were thus encouraged to proceed with the work of building the temple. It now follows—

12. For the seed *shall be* prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these *things*.

12. Quia semen pacis, vitis proferet fructum suum, et terra proferet fructum suum (*est quidem aliud nomen, sed idem significat,*) et cœli dabunt rorem suum; et possidere faciam reliquias populi hujus omnia hæc.

Here Zechariah promises the continuance of God's favour, which the Jews had now begun to taste. God then had in part openly showed that he was a Father to the Jews, by dealing liberally with them: but in order more fully to strengthen them in their perseverance, Zechariah says that this favour would be continued.

And he says first, that there would be *the seed of peace.* Some think that it is called the seed of peace because the cultivation of the fields, while the assaults of enemies were dreaded, was deserted; no one dared to bring out his oxen or his horses, and then even when the husbandmen sowed their fields, it was not done as in seasons of quietness and security. As then the fields, when badly cultivated in times of war, do not produce a full crop, so they think that it is called the seed of peace, when husbandmen are permitted to employ necessary labour, when they are free from every fear, and devote securely their toils on the cultivation and the sowing of their fields. Others explain the seed of peace to be this—that it is so when neither storms, nor tempests, nor mildew, nor any other evils do any harm to the corn and fruit. But as שָׁלוֹם, *shelum*, means often in Hebrew prosperity, we may so take it here, that it would be *the*

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seed of peace, that is, that the seed would be prosperous; and this interpretation seems to me less strained. *It shall* then *be the seed of peace*, that is, it shall prosper according to your labour; what is sown shall produce its proper fruit.[1]

There is added an explanation—*The vine shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and the heaven shall yield its dew.* We hence conclude that it was called the seed of peace, because the husbandmen gained their object when the earth, irrigated by the dew of heaven, was not sterile, and when the produce was abundant, when there was plenty of corn and wine, and of other things. There is then peace or prosperity as to the seed, when the corn grows according to our wishes, and comes to maturity, and when heaven responds to the earth, and withholds not its dew, as we have seen in another place. In short, God testifies that the remnant of his people should abound in all good things, for the heaven would not withhold from them its rain, nor the earth shut up its bowels.

But God ever recalls his people to himself, that they may depend on his blessing; for it would be a cold doctrine were we not persuaded of this—that the earth is not otherwise

[1] It is not easy to know the precise meaning of this phrase, capable as it is of various explanations. *Jerome*, *Grotius*, and *Marckius* consider "the remnant," mentioned in the preceding verse, as meant by the seed, "For the seed *shall be* peace," or peaceable, instead of being rebellious as before. The verse, as stated by *Marckius*, may be thus rendered,—

For *to* the seed of peace
Shall the vine yield its fruit, &c.

But what seems most consonant with the whole passage, is to regard זרע as meaning seed-time or sowing, (Gen. viii. 22,) and to consider שלום to be, in its ordinary sense, as signifying peace or peaceable. It was said before, in verse 10, that there was no peace to goers and comers, such as went forth to labour in the field: but now there was to be a different state of things. Then the version would be,—

12. For the sowing-time *will be* peaceable;
The vine shall give its fruit,
And the land shall give its increase,
And the heavens shall give their dew:
Yea, I will cause the remnant of this people
To inherit all these things.

But most follow *Calvin's* view: so do *Newcome* and *Henderson*.

Blayney considers זרע a participle, and construes the words in connection with the former verse, "I will not be to the residue of this people such as I was in former days," (that is, a sower of discord, as verse 10,) "but a sower of peace." This certainly makes the construction easier.—*Ed.*

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fruitful than as God gives it the power of generating and of bringing forth. We ought therefore ever to regard the blessing of God, and to ask of him to supply us with food, and to pray him every day, as we are taught, to give us our daily bread. But few do this from the heart, and hardly one in a hundred so turns his thoughts to God's hand as firmly to believe that he daily receives from him his daily food. We now understand what the Prophet means in these words. It now follows—

13. And it shall come to pass, *that* as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, *but* let your hands be strong.

13. Et erit, quemadmodum fuistis maledictio inter gentes, domus Iehudah, et domus Israel; sic servabo vos et eritis benedictio: ne timeatis, roborentur manus vestræ.

He goes on with the same subject, and in this verse he states two contrary things, in order to render more clear what he teaches here—that while God was angry the earth was barren, and all things went on unhappily with the Jews; but that when God had begun to be reconciled, the earth had as it were changed its nature, and brought forth plentifully, and that they were in every way made blessed.

Hence he says, *As ye have been a curse*, &c. Here again he mentions and reminds them how miserable they were while they minded only their private interest, and by neglecting the temple manifested their impiety and ingratitude; for what ought they to have been more ready to do when they returned to their country than to build the temple, and to offer there sacrifices to God, in order to avow him as the author of their deliverance? But the temple was neglected; and the Prophet concludes that they must have been extremely forgetful, if they did not consider what their condition was as long as they had no care for the temple; and he says that they had been a *curse among the nations;* that is, that they were an example of a curse, according to the threatening of the law. For it is a mode of speaking frequent in Scripture, that the people were a curse; and the common formula of cursing was—"Let the Lord curse thee

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as he does the Jews." Zechariah then says that the Jews had been *a curse*, that they had not only been smitten by God's hand, but that they had been given up to calamities, in order that they might become to all detestable, and bear in a manner signs of God's wrath imprinted on them. Whoever then at that time looked on a Jew, he might see that he had the appearance of bearing a curse. In short, Zechariah means that the Jews had been punished in a manner not common or usual, but that God had executed on them dreadful judgments, which made it evident to all that he was grievously offended with them. *Ye have been* then *a curse among all nations.*[1]

He then adds, *So I will save you, and ye shall be a blessing.* The word *save* is introduced that God might more clearly set forth his favour, lest the Jews should think that the change had been effected by fortuitous chance; for we know that men's thoughts soon change, and they feign this or that cause that they may obscure God's providence. God then, before he promises that they should be a blessing, says that he would save them. What it is to be a blessing may be easily learnt from the opposite clause. They are then said to be a blessing who bear evident tokens of God's favour and kindness. So the Prophet means, that when people wished to be prayed for, or when they wished well to one another, this would be the common form of their requests—"May God bless us as he blesses his chosen people: as the Jews are dear to God, so may he favour us with the same or similar kindness." Thus then we see that the Jews were a curse, when exposed to extreme reproaches; and that they became a blessing when God manifested towards them

[1] *Calvin* takes no notice of the words "House of Judah, and house of Israel." This has occasioned difficulty to some interpreters. But *Newcome* thinks that "many of the ten tribes" returned with "the house of Judah" from captivity, and are here addressed. *Henderson* is of the same opinion, and adds these remarks—"They also (that is the house of Israel) returned to Palestine, בימים האלה, in the very days (ver. 15) to which it (the prophecy) refers. All attempts to discover them at more recent periods have proved utterly fruitless; and the idea that they must still exist somewhere in the world, and are still to be restored in their tribal state, has arisen from misconstruction of those prophecies which refer to the return from Babylon."—*Ed.*

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tokens of favour, and showed in reality, or by the effect, that he was pacified towards them.

He says, in the last place, *Fear ye not; strengthened be your hands.* He exhorts them to entertain hope, for fear stands opposed to confidence; and fear, proceeding from unbelief, cannot be otherwise dissipated but by God's promises made to us, which chase away all doubts. Rightly then does the Prophet teach us that the Jews had no reason to fear, for he declares that God was propitious to them. We indeed know that all fear cannot be wholly driven away from the hearts of men; for it would be necessary to deprive us of every feeling before we could regard dangers without fears. But though fear is natural to us, and occasions of fear ever occur to us, yet the fear of unbelief may be dispelled by faith; and hence it is no wonder that God condemns fear, when he promises salvation to his elect. But as I have said, we ought to observe that there is here a contrast between condemnable fear and that confidence which relies on God's word. We must also add, that the confidence of God's children is never so complete that they are free from all fear, even the fear of unbelief; but still we ought to struggle against it, so as not to be hindered in the course of our calling. And this we learn more fully from the end of the verse.

Strengthened be your hands. But why does the Prophet forbid the Jews to fear? even for this purpose,—that they might arouse themselves for the work which the Lord had allotted to them, and not allow fear to retard them or to prevent them to persevere.

We now then perceive how the faithful become prepared and ready to render service to God: sloth must first be shaken off—but how? even by having fear removed. What is the remedy for healing fear? even to recumb on the promises of God; for when our minds are composed, the hands and the feet and all the members will be ready to do their office. Alacrity both of mind and heart and of all the members follows, when fear is shaken off, and when men begin so to rely on God's word, as to know that his help is enough for them against all dangers, and to dread nothing, being

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convinced that the Lord will by his power remove all hinderances.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be cold and frigid, when all our actions ought to be consecrated to thee, and all our members to be devoted to thy service in obedience to thy word, —O grant, that we may every day courageously strive against our natural indifference, and contend with all hinderances, and boldly repel all assaults which Satan may make, so that though our fervour may not be such as it ought to be, we may yet with sincere desire and genuine affection of heart ever advance in the course of our calling, until we reach the goal and be gathered into thy kingdom to enjoy the victory which thou hast promised to us, and with which thou also daily favourest us, until at length it be fully enjoyed, when we shall be gathered into thy celestial kingdom, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fiftieth.

14. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts, and I repented not;

15. So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.

14. Quia sic dicit Iehovah exercituum, Quemadmodum cogitavi malum inferre vobis dum me inflammarunt (*aut*, provocarunt) patres vestri, dicit Iehova exercituum; et non pœnituit me;

15. Sic conversus sum, cogitavi diebus istis benefacere Ierosolymæ et domui Iehudah, ne timeatis.

The Prophet confirms the truth in the preceding verse, when he said that there would be a wholly different lot to the Jews, as they would in every way be blessed. He shows the cause of the change; for God would begin to favour them, who had been before displeased with them. We indeed know that the Holy Spirit everywhere calls men before God's tribunal, that they may know that no adversity happens to them, except through their sins. So also in this place Zechariah reminds us, that God had been angry with the Jews, because they had provoked his wrath. But now a promise is added, that God had *turned;* not that he had changed his mind, but he meant to show that he was paci-

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fied.[1] We indeed know that we are to judge of God's love or hatred to us by outward things; for when God treats us severely, manifest tokens of his wrath appear; but when he deals kindly with us, then the fruit of reconciliation seems evident. According to this view does he now say, that God was of another mind than formerly towards the Jews; for he designed to show them kindness, having before sharply and severely chastised them. But we must more particularly consider each part.

He says, that as God had previously resolved to punish the Jews, he was now inclined to show mercy, and that they would find him as it were changed and different from what he had been. These verses, as I have said, are explanatory; for the Prophet had briefly promised that the Jews would be a remarkable example of being a blessed people, but he now shows why God had previously inflicted on them so many evils and calamities, even because their fathers had provoked his wrath. And when he says that he had visited them on account of the crimes or sins of their fathers, we must understand this of the body of the people. Superfluous then is the question which some interpreters moot, Whether God punished the children for the sins of their fathers, when yet he declares in another place, that the soul that sins shall die: for in this place the Prophet does not distinguish the fathers from the children, but intimates that God had not

[1] Some, as *Drusius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*, as well as our own translators, have regarded this verb "turned" as used here adverbially, as it is evidently in some places, "So again have I thought," or purposed: but the construction here is not the same as when it occurs in that sense; and it is to be taken here in contrast to the not repenting in the preceding verse. God in the former instance did not turn, or change, or repent; but now he is said to have turned. I render the two verses thus,—

14. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
As I fully purposed to render evil to you,
Because your fathers made me extremely angry,
Saith Jehovah of hosts,
And I did not repent;
15. So have I turned, *and* fully purposed in these days
To do good to Jerusalem,
And to the house of Judah; fear not.

The verb זמם is more than to think or to purpose; it being a reduplicate verb, it signifies to purpose firmly or fully. The Septuagint and the Syriac version supply *and* before it in verse 15.—*Ed.*

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been propitious to the Jews, because they had before greatly provoked his wrath. There is yet no doubt, but that every one justly suffered the punishment of his iniquity. The import of the whole is, that the Jews gained nothing by evasion, for God had not without reason visited them, but had rendered a just reward for their sins. This is one thing.

What he adds, that God *repented not* for being thus angry, means the same as though he had said, that the Jews through their perverseness had only rendered God's rigour inflexible. Zechariah then reminds us, that when men cease not to add evils to evils, and obstinately rush on as though they would make war with God, he then becomes as it were obstinate too, and according to what is said in the eighteenth Psalm, "deals perversely with the perverse." The reason then why God declares that he had been implacable to his people, is, because the wickedness of those whom he had spared and long tolerated was become unhealable; for when he saw that they were wholly perverse, he armed himself for vengeance.

And hence we may gather a general truth,—that God cannot be intreated by us, except when we begin to repent; not that our repentance anticipates God's mercy, for the question here is not, what man of himself and of his own inclination can do; as the object of Zechariah is only to teach us, that when God designs to forgive us, he changes our hearts and turns us to obedience by his Spirit; for when he leaves us in our hardness, we must necessarily be ever afflicted by his hand until we at last perish.

We must at the same time notice what I have also referred to,—that God here closes the mouths of the Jews, that they might not murmur against his severity, as though he had dealt cruelly with them. He then shows that these punishments were just which the Jews had endured; for it had not been for one day only, but for a continued succession of time, that the fathers had excited his wrath. The reason why he speaks of the fathers rather than of themselves is, because they had for a long series of years hardened themselves in their wickedness, and corruption had become in

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them as it were hereditary. He now says that he had turned; not that he was of another mind, as we have already said, but this is to be understood of what the people experienced; for God seemed to be in a manner different, when he became kind to them and showed them favour, having before manifested many tokens of vengeance.

Now at the end of the verse the Prophet reminds us of the application of his doctrine, even to encourage the Jews, that they might go on with alacrity in the work of building the temple. But we have said that we ought to be armed with God's promises, so that we may with courageous hearts follow wherever he may call us; for we shall all presently faint except we find that the hand of God is present with us. Since then we are by nature slothful and tender, and since inconstancy often creeps in, this is our only remedy,—that when we seek to go on in the course of our calling to the end, we know that God will be ever a help to us; and this is what the Prophet now teaches us. He then applies what he had before promised to its legitimate purpose,—to encourage the Jews to lay aside their fear, courageously to undertake their work, and to expect what was not yet evident, even a complete restoration. It follows—

16. These *are* the things that ye shall do, Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

17. And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the Lord.

16. Hæc verba quæ facietis (Hæc sunt, *nam nomen* דברים *est supervacuum*, Hæc sunt *igitur* quæ facietis,) Loquimini veritatem, quisque cum socio suo; veritatem et judicium pacis judicate in portis vestris;

17. Et vir (et quisque) malum socio suo ne cogitetis in cordibus vestris; et jusjurandum mendacii ne diligatis; quia omnia hæc sunt quæ odio habeo, dicit Iehova.

Zechariah exhorts them here to true repentance, by showing that more things were to be hoped for than what they saw with their eyes; and at the same time he shows that it was not enough for them assiduously to build the city and the temple; but he requires other things, even that they should observe integrity and justice towards one another. We indeed know that the Jews were so given to their own

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ceremonies, that they thought that holiness existed in them: and this error Zechariah had before condemned, and now he inculcates the same truth,—that if they wished to have God propitious to them, and also wished to enjoy continually that goodness which they had already tasted, they were to strive to secure it not only by sacrifices and other ceremonies, but especially by attention to justice and equity.

But the Prophet does not here mention every part of an upright life, but only refers to some things. This mode of speaking is quite common, as we have already often noticed. The Prophet then states a part for the whole; but still he includes generally the whole of the second table, when he says that these things were to be observed,[1] even that they should *speak the truth;* that is, deal faithfully with one another, abstain from every falsehood and deceit, and from every kind of craftiness,—and also that they should *execute justice in their gates.* And because he names *neighbours* here, it would be very absurd for any one hence to conclude, that it is lawful to defraud strangers, or those with whom we have no near connection: but the Prophet by this term

[1] Literally it is, "These the words which ye shall do." The term "words" means here what the words contain, and may therefore be rendered, "commands," or "do" may be translated "observe:"—

These *are* the commands which ye shall do,—
Speak the truth, each one to his neighbour;
The truth and the judgment of peace
Pronounce in your gates.

Instead of "Pronounce," *Newcome* has "Determine," and *Henderson*, as in our version, "Execute;" the more literal rendering is "Judge:" but the verb often means to decide, to determine, to declare a thing as a judge, or to pronounce sentence in a cause. What they were required here was to pronounce what was true and right according to the law, and to give such a judgment as was calculated to promote peace and concord, "by deterring the litigious," as *Newcome* observes, "and punishing the evil doer." *Jerome*, *Drusius*, *Pemble*, *Henry*, and *Grotius*, give the same view of "the judgment of peace;" but *Henderson* agrees with Calvin, and renders it "sound judgment." The former view is most to be approved, as the latter is less distinct, for "true" and "sound" are nearly the same. "Let the judges," observes *Henry*, "that sit in the gates, in all their judicial proceedings have regard both to truth and to peace; let them take care to do justice, and to accommodate differences, and prevent vexatious suits. It must be a judgment of truth in order to peace; and a judgment of peace as far as is consistent with truth, and no further."

The words, "speak the truth," *Kimchi* very beautifully explains thus,—"Speak not with one thing in your mouth and another thing in your heart."—*Ed.*

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meant only to set forth the atrocious conduct of the Jews, who spared not even their friends and their brethren. Though then it is a wicked thing to deceive any one, even the farthest from us, it is yet a greater crime when one lies in wait for his near neighbour and brother: and we know that this mode of speaking occurs everywhere in the law; for God, in order to restrain us from evil deeds, has set before us that kind of sin which we are constrained by the impulse of nature to detest. Thus he speaks of secret hatred as being murder. Then the Prophet in this place meant more sharply to reprove the Jews, because such barbarity had prevailed among them, that no one regarded his neighbour, but raged as it were against his own bowels.

As to the words, *truth* and the *judgment of peace*, he intimates by them, that not only individuals were privately given to evil deeds, but that also the court of justice was full of frauds and wrong acts, while it ought to have been the sanctuary of justice. Though many may be perversely wicked among the people, yet their audacity and wickedness are always restrained, when the laws are put in force, and uncorrupt judges rule. But the Prophet shows that the judges had become like robbers, for there was no integrity in the gates. He mentions *truth* first, for the judges craftily perverted all truth by misrepresentations, as it is commonly the case. For even the worst of men do not openly say that they approve of a wicked deed; but they find out disguises by which they cover their own baseness, and that of those who do wrong, whom they favour, when bribed with money. It is then necessary that *truth* should have the first place in courts of justice. By the *judgment of peace* he understands, when his own is given to every one. Some think that what is right is called the judgment of peace, because when mercenary judges condemn and oppress the innocent, and for gain's sake patronize what is wrong, many tumults often arise, and then open war ensues: but as the word peace has a wide meaning in Hebrew, we may take the *judgment of peace* as meaning only a calm and a rightly formed judgment. The Jews, we know, administered justice in the gates.

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He afterwards adds, *And think not evil every one against his friend.* Here the Prophet not only condemns open wrongs, but also the hidden purposes of evil. We hence learn, that the law was not only given to restrain men as it were by a bridle, and that it not only contains a rule of life as to outward duties, but that it also rules their hearts before God and angels. The law is indeed really spiritual; and extremely gross and foolish are they who think that they satisfy the law of Moses, when they abstain from murder and theft and other evil deeds; for we see that the Prophets everywhere required a right feeling in the heart, as Zechariah does in this place, who reminds the Jews, that they were not to devise evil against their friends, no, not *in their hearts.* He might have omitted the last words; but he meant to condemn those frauds which were wont to be covered by many and various disguises. Though then men may not bring forth their wickedness, yet Zechariah shows that God will punish it; for whatever dwells within, however concealed it may be from the eyes of men, however hidden it may be in the depth of the heart, it must yet come to an account before God.

He adds another kind of evil, even perjury, *And love not the oath of falsehood.* He might have said, Swear not to the injury of thy neighbour; but there is to be observed here a contrast between the perverted love of men and the hatred of God. As then God hates a false oath as all other frauds and falsehoods, so he forbids us to desire it: for if we wish to please God, we must see what he requires from us, inasmuch as we designedly provoke his wrath when we desire or covet what he declares that he hates. In a word, Zechariah shows that God would be propitious and kind to the Jews, provided they truly and from the heart repented, and attended to what was right and just—not only to build the temple, to offer sacrifices, and to observe other rites, but also to form their life according to what integrity required; to labour not only by external acts to discharge their duties towards their neighbours; but also to cleanse their hearts from all hatred, all cruelty, and all depraved affections. It now follows—

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18. And the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me, saying,

19. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, The fast of the fourth *month*, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

18. Et fuit sermo Iehovæ exercituum ad me, dicendo,

19. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Iejunium quarti, et jejunium quinti, et jejunium septimi, et jejunium decimi (mensis,) erit domui Iehudah in gaudium et lætitiam et dies festos bonos; ergo veritatem et pacem diligite.

He confirms the same truth, that such would be the restoration of the Church that all the memory of their sorrows would be obliterated. We have already said, that some fasts were observed by the Jews after the destruction of their city. Before two only were mentioned, but now the Prophet names four. In the fourth month the city was taken, and in the fifth the temple was destroyed and burnt down; in the seventh was Gedaliah slain, who had remained with the residue of the people who had been gathered by him; and the fast of the tenth month, as some think, was appointed when the city was besieged. If so, the fast of the tenth month preceded the rest, then followed the fast of the fourth month, in the third place the fast of the fifth month, and, lastly, the fast of the seventh month, on account of the death of Gedaliah.

These then were tokens of mourning to the time of the restoration; for when the city was besieged, God raised up, as it were, a sign of dreadful vengeance; and when Nebuchadnezzar broke through the wall of the city, it was then openly forsaken by God; after the burning of the temple there remained no hope, except that some of the common people continued in the land under the protection of Gedaliah. The root, as it were, of the people was cut off, but some thin fibres were remaining; and when even these were torn asunder, when all who could be found were led into exile, the favour of God had wholly disappeared as to the outward appearance. It behoved then the Jews to be in mourning and humiliation, that they might seek pardon from God. We shall not then say, that these fasts were without reason, and foolishly appointed by them, for they were at liberty to testify their sorrow; nay, it was an act

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of piety humbly in their guilt to deprecate the wrath of the celestial Judge, when they perceived that he was displeased with them. But God now promises joy, which was to extinguish all sorrow, as the rising of the sun drives away all the darkness of the night.

But the Prophet seems to allude to what he had before taught when he indirectly taunted the Jews, because they were too anxious about keeping fasts, while they neglected the main things. But the simple meaning is, that if the Jews really repented and sincerely sought to return to God's favour, there would be an end to all their miseries, so that there would be no need of fasting.

We must also remember that the design of fasting is this, that those who have sinned may humble themselves before God, and go as suppliants before his throne, that they may confess their sins and condemn themselves. Fasting then is, as it were, the habit of criminals when they desire to obtain pardon from God; for Christ says, that there is no fasting at marriages and during festal days. (Matt. ix. 15.) We then see that there is here promised a restoration which was to put an end to every former cause of sorrow among the people; not that these fasts of themselves displeased God, for they were appointed, as we have said, for a good purpose—that the people might thus exercise themselves in acts of piety, and also stimulate and support their hope till the time of their deliverance; but Zechariah pursues what he had begun—that God was now plainly reconciled, for he favoured his people, and proved this by the blessings he bestowed.

With regard to *festal days*, we know that among other things they are expressly mentioned by Moses, "Thou shalt rejoice before thy God." (Deut. xii. 18.) When therefore the Jews celebrated their festal meetings, it was the same as though they stood before God, and were thus fully persuaded that they were in his presence. Forasmuch then as God thus designed to exhilarate his people by festivals, the Prophet does not without reason say, that the fasts, which had been signs of mourning, would be turned into joy and into festal days. Moreover, the Prophet thus speaks, because

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the observance of the law, which prevailed while the people were in a state of security, had been interrupted in their exile—as though he had said, "As God expelled you to a foreign land, and made you while exiles from your country to grieve and mourn, so now being restored you shall have joy, and religiously keep your festal days." And thus he indirectly reproves the Jews for having deprived themselves of their festal days, in which the law invited them to rejoice, for they had profaned them. God would not have suffered to be discontinued what he had commanded, had not religion been corrupted; for on this account it was that things changed for the worse, and that sorrow succeeded, which is here designated by fastings.

At length he concludes by saying, *Love ye then truth and peace.* By truth he means integrity, as we have said before; and Zechariah includes in this word the whole of what is just and right: for when our hearts are cleansed, then the rule of justice and equity is observed. When then we deal sincerely with our neighbours, all the duties of love freely flow from within as from a fountain. As to the word *peace,* it may be explained in two ways: either as in the former instance when he mentioned the judgment of peace in the sense of judgment rightly formed, and thus to love peace is to love good order; or it may be taken for God's blessing, as though the Prophet said, "If ye wish to be in a good and prosperous state, observe integrity towards one another; for God will ever be present by his blessing, provided ye be sincere and faithful.[1] Ye have in a manner sought a curse

[1] It is better to regard "peace" here in its ordinary meaning, as opposed to strife and contention, as "truth" is to falsehood and deceit. They were to "love truth" and not falsehood, and also "peace" and concord, and not discord and contention.

The ו, *vau,* at the beginning of this sentence has been variously rendered: "only" by *Jerome* and *Drusius;* "therefore" by *Calvin* and *Blayney;* "but" by *Newcome* and *Henderson.* But there is no need of all this. Let the whole passage be rendered in a preceptive form, and it may have its usual meaning as a copulative, as in the following manner,—

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Let the fast of the fourth, and the fast of the fifth,
And the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth *month,*
Be to the house of Judah
For exultation and joy,

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for yourselves, and dried up as it were the fountain of God's blessings by your wickedness and your frauds. If then truth reign among you, all felicity shall accompany it; for the Lord will bless you." I shall not proceed farther now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou invitest us so kindly and graciously to thyself, we may not be refractory, but with every evil affection subdued, offer ourselves to thy service; and since thou requirest nothing else from us but to observe what is right towards one another,—O grant that we may be mindful of that brotherhood which thine only-begotten Son has consecrated by his own blood, and call on thee as our Father, and prove by the whole of our conduct that we are thy children; and may every one of us so labour for one another, that being united in heart and affection, we may with one consent aspire after that blessed life, where we shall enjoy that inheritance which has been prepared and obtained by the blood of thy Son, and through him laid up for us in heaven.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-first.

20. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, *It shall* yet *come to pass*, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

21. And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also.

22. Yea, many people and strong

20. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Adhuc quando venient populi et incolæ urbium magnarum (*vel*, multarum;)

21. Et venient incolæ unius ad alteram, dicendo, Eamus eundo ad deprecandam faciem Iehovæ, et quærendum Iehovam exercituum; ibo etiam ego.

22. Et venient populi magni et

And for cheerful seasons;
And love ye truth and peace.

"Exultation," שׂשׂון, is the outward expression of joy; the most obvious thing is mentioned first, as often is the case in Scripture, and then the source from which it proceeds, even joy. "Cheerful" is literally "good,"—good seasons, or festivals, or solemnities. "The Hebrews," says *Grotius*, "were wont to call those days *good* which were appointed for rejoicing." This passage contains the answer to the inquiry mentioned in ch. vii. 3; but the answer refers not only to one fast but to all the fasts which the Jews had instituted.—*Ed.*

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nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

gentes robustæ ad quærendum Iehovam exercituum Ierosolymæ, et deprecandam faciem Iehovæ.

THE Prophet here extends his discourse still farther; for he promises not only the complete restoration of his chosen people, but also the propagation of the Church; for God, he says, will gather a Church for himself from many and remote nations, and unite many nations in one body. And this ought to have availed especially to animate the Jews, as they were thus taught that the temple was built, not only that God might be worshipped by one nation, but by all nations. Moreover, as before this time some had come from distant lands to worship God, the Prophet may seem here to have this in view by using עוֹד, *oud*, the adverb of time.[1] But he not only declares that some would come, as in the time of Solomon, but as I have already said, he promises here something more remarkable—that the temple would not belong peculiarly to the Jews, but would be common to all nations; for there is to be no language and no nation which is not to unite in the true worship of God. But let us consider the words of the Prophet.

He begins by saying, that God was the author of this prophecy; and this was said to secure credit. There was need, as we have said, of no common authority, since he was here speaking of what was incredible. There was only a handful of people returned to their country, and many dangers surrounded them almost every day; so that many, wearied with their present condition, preferred exile, and regret for their return had now crept into the minds of many, for they thought that they had been deceived. Since then the state of the people was such, there was need of something more than ordinary to confirm what is here said—that the glory of the second temple would be greater and more

[1] There is a difficulty in the construction here. The best solution is that of our version, followed by *Grotius*, *Newcome*, and others; there is understood the auxiliary verb, "it shall be:" so the rendering would be,

Yet *it shall be* that come shall people
And the inhabitants of many cities.

There is a similar instance in verse 23, where the auxiliary verb is to be understood, and אֲשֶׁר must be rendered *that*.—*Ed.*

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eminent than that of the first: *It shall yet be*, he says. Though a comparison is implied, there is yet no equality expressed, as though some few only would come. But as there had been no temple for seventy years, and as the temple, now begun to be built, was in no high esteem, but mean and insignificant, the Prophet says, that the time would yet come, when *nations and inhabitants of great cities* would *ascend into Jerusalem*. We may indeed render רבות, *rebut*, many or great, for it means both; but the Prophet, I think, speaks of great cities; and the reason will presently appear.

It follows, *Come shall the inhabitants of one to one*, that is, the inhabitants of one city to another; *saying, going let us go*, &c. He means by these words, that there will be a mutual consent among all nations, so that they will stimulate one another, and thus unite together their exertions. We here see that the Prophet's object was to encourage the Jews to entertain good hope, and thus to cause them to persevere, so that they might not doubt but that success would attend their work and labour, because the Lord would have himself worshipped at Jerusalem, not only by themselves but also by all nations. But as the Jews could not believe that nations could by force be drawn there, he teaches them, that their assembling would be voluntary; he says that those who had been before extremely refractory would be disposed to come of their own accord, so that there would be no need of external force to constrain them; for they would willingly come, nay, would excite one another, and by mutual exhortations stimulate themselves so as to come together to worship God at Jerusalem.

The ardour and vehemence of their zeal is to be noticed; for the Prophet says, that they would come of their own accord, and also encourage one another, according to what we have seen in the second chapter, "Lay hold will each on the hand of his brother, and say, let us go to the mount of the God of Jacob." But more is expressed in this place, for not only shall each one encourage his brother whenever met and an opportunity be offered, but he says that they will come from all quarters. We now then see the design of the

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Prophet in these words. And we hence learn, that faith then only produces its legitimate fruit when zeal is kindled, so that every one strives to increase the kingdom of God, and to gather the straying, that the Church may be filled. For when any one consults his own private benefit and has no care for others, he first betrays most clearly his own inhumanity, and where there is no love the Spirit of God does not rule there. Besides, true godliness brings with it a concern for the glory of God. It is no wonder then that the Prophet, when describing true and real conversion, says, that each would be solicitous about his brethren, so as to stimulate one another, and also that the hearts of all would be so kindled with zeal for God, that they would hasten together to celebrate his glory.

Then he adds, *Let us go to entreat the face of Jehovah.* The phrase is common in Scripture. But we must observe, that the Prophet in speaking of God's worship, sets prayer in the first rank, for prayer to God is the chief part, yea, the main thing in religion. It is, indeed, immediately added, *and to seek Jehovah:* he explains the particular by the general; and in the next verse he inverts the order, beginning with the general. However, the meaning continues the same, for God seeks nothing else but that we should be teachable and obedient, so as to be prepared to follow wherever he may call us, and at the same time carefully to enquire respecting his will, as we have need of him as our leader and teacher, so that we may not foolishly go astray through winding and circuitous courses; for if we deem it enough to take presumptuously our own way, the endeavour to seek God will be superfluous. It must then be observed, that God is then only really sought when men desire to learn from his word how he is to be worshipped. But, as I have already said, the Prophet adds prayer here, for the design of the whole truth respecting salvation is to teach us, that our life depends on God, and that whatever belongs to eternal life must be hoped for and expected from him.[1] We now then understand the import of the whole.

[1] The 20th and 21st I render thus—
20. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,

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But we must enquire also why he says, that the nations would come to seek God at *Jerusalem*, and there to call on him. The Jews foolishly imagine that God cannot be otherwise worshipped than by offering sacrifices still in the temple. But the Prophet had something very different in view—that the light of truth would arise from that city, which would diffuse itself far and wide: and this prophecy ought to be connected with that of Isaiah, "A law shall go forth from Sion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Is. ii. 3.) As then the doctrine of salvation which has filled the whole world flowed from that city, the Prophet says, that nations would come to Jerusalem, not that it would be necessary for them to assemble there, but because all were to seek there what could not be obtained elsewhere. Since then none could be accounted the children of God except they were brought up in that school and acknowledged that alone to be true religion which had its first habitation at Jerusalem, we hence see why the Prophet expressly mentions that city.

We must further bear in mind, that the temple was built for this end and purpose,—that the doctrine of salvation might continue there, and have there its seat until the coming of Christ; for then was fulfilled that prophecy in the hundred and tenth Psalm, "The sceptre of thy power shall God send forth from Sion." The Prophet here teaches us, that Christ would not be the king of one people only, whose power was to be confined to narrow limits, but that

> Yet *it shall be* that come shall people
> And the inhabitants of many cities;
> Yea, the inhabitants of one shall go to another, saying,
> "Going let us go to implore the favour of Jehovah;
> And to seek Jehovah of hosts, go also will I."

The verb rendered "implore," means to solicit with importunity, or earnestness. "To conciliate the regard of Jehovah," as rendered by *Henderson*, is too much in the style of modern phraseology; nor is the meaning conveyed. *Blayney's* version is better, "To supplicate the favour of Jehovah." It seems more suitable to connect the words "to seek Jehovah," with the last sentence. We find the two clauses in the next verse, but in an inverted order—

> 22. Yea, come shall many people and mighty nations
> To seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem,
> And to implore the favour of Jehovah.—*Ed.*

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he would rule through the whole world, for God would extend his sceptre to every quarter of the globe. As then it behoved the Jews to have this end in view, the Prophet, in order to animate them that they might not fail in the middle of their work, says, that that place was sacred to God, so that salvation might thence be sought by the whole world, for all were to be the disciples of that Church who wished to be deemed the children of God.

But we ought carefully to notice what I have already referred to, the two things required in God's worship—to seek him, and also to pray to him. For the superstitious, though they pretend great ardour in seeking God, yet amuse themselves with many delusions; for they hurry on presumptuously, and as it were at random, so that they seek not God, but leave him, and weary themselves without thought and without any judgment. As then the superstitious have no reason for what they do, they cannot be said properly to seek God. But the faithful seek God, for they acknowledge that he is not to be worshipped according to the fancy of any one, but that there is a certain prescript and rule to be observed. To us then this is the beginning of religion—not to allow to ourselves liberty to attempt anything we please, but humbly and soberly to submit to God's word; for when any one seeks and chooses an unfit teacher, he will not advance as he ought to do. But the Prophet shows, that all the godly succeed when they strive to be approved of God by confining themselves to his word, and by attempting nothing through their own promptings, but when they have such a discernment as not to blend, as it is said, profane with sacred things. The second chief thing is, to pray to God: and the Prophet thus reminds us why it is that God would have us especially to seek him. Nothing indeed results to his advantage and benefit from our efforts, but he would have us to seek him that we may learn to expect from him everything connected with our salvation. This seeking is also defined by the term prayer, and not useless is the word *face*, for though God is invisible, we yet ought not to wander with uncertainty, as it were through the air, when our purpose is to flee to him, but to go to him with full con-

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fidence. Unless then we are fully persuaded of what the Scripture teaches us—that God is ever nigh those who truly call on him, the door will be closed against our prayers, for God's name will be profaned though we may express what we wish. As then the nearness of God ought to be impressed on our hearts when we prepare ourselves for prayer, the Scripture usually adopts this form, *to entreat the face of God.* But this is not to be understood of an ocular sight, but, on the contrary, of the conviction of the heart. Let us now proceed—

23. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days *it shall come to pass,* that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard *that* God *is* with you.

23. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, In diebus istis *fiet* ut apprehendant decem homines ex cunctis linguis gentium, apprehendant alam viri Judæi, dicendo, Ambulabimus (*vel,* ambulemus) vobiscum, quia audivimus quòd Deus sit vobiscum.

He pursues the same subject in this verse; for as he had before said, that the nations would willingly come to worship God, and that each would encourage his brother to undertake this pious and holy expedition, so he now adds, that ten men would lay hold on the border of a Jew's garment: *Ten men shall then take hold on the skirt of a Jew.* He shows here more clearly what I have briefly referred to—that there would be no need of arms, or of any compulsion, in order to draw or compel the nations to engage in God's service; for even ten would of themselves accompany one Jew; and it is a proof of a very great readiness when ten surrender themselves to be ruled by one. As one Jew could not be sufficient to draw so many nations, the Prophet declares that there would be everywhere a union of faith, so that those, before wholly alienated from God, would desire to join themselves as friends, or rather as companions to the Jews.

He says, *From all languages.* By these words he amplifies the miracle; for there cannot be a union between men far distant, especially when they are of different languages, as they are barbarians to one another. When the Prophet then says that they would *come from all languages,* and unite to-

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gether, it more fully appears to be God's work; for there is nothing here to be ascribed to human contrivances. It must then be that the hearts of those who cannot express their minds, and can hardly give a sign, are united together by the hidden power of the Spirit. We now perceive the Prophet's object in this verse.

But he uses in the last clause a phrase different from the one he employed before—*Let us go with you, for we have heard that with you is God.* He had said, "Let us go to seek Jehovah, and to entreat his face;" but now he says—"Let us go with you." But yet he handles and confirms the same thing; for the nations could not have sought God without following the Jews going before them. For when any one separates himself from others, it so happens that he is led astray, and feeds on much that is very absurd, as we see to be the case with proud and morose men, who invent strange and monstrous things; for they shun society, and seem not to themselves to be wise, until they put off every feeling of humanity. The character then of faith has also this in it—that the elect, while they themselves obey God, desire to have many associates in this obedience, and many fellow-disciples in true religion. The Prophet thus intended to point out two things: he had said before—"Let us go to seek God;" and now—"We will go with you." What else is this but to seek God? But he expresses more now—that the nations declare that they would come to seek God for this end—that they might learn from others, like rude beginners, who have their fellow-scholars as their teachers; so that every one who had made some progress, was to preside over others, and those as yet commencing, and still in the first elements of knowledge, were humbly to connect themselves with others better informed. Shame prevents many from making in this manner any advancement, and so they ever remain sunk in ignorance.

The Prophet at the same time not only commends humility, but also exhorts all God's children to cultivate unity and concord. For whosoever tears asunder the Church of God, disunites himself from Christ, who is the head, and who would have all his members to be united together.

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We now then understand that God ought to be sought in order to be rightly worshipped by us; and also, that he ought to be thus sought, not that each may have his own peculiar religion, but that we may be united together, and that every one who sees his brethren going before, and excelling in gifts, may be prepared to follow them, and to seek benefit from their labours. It is indeed true that we ought to disregard the whole world, and to embrace only the truth of God; for it is a hundred times better to renounce the society of all mortals, and union with them, than to withdraw ourselves from God; but when God shows himself as our leader, the Prophet teaches us that we ought mutually to stretch forth our hand and unitedly to follow him.

We have again to notice at the end of the verse what I have already referred to—that the nations would come, not compelled by force of arms or by violence, but drawn by hearing alone. *We have heard.* By hearing the Prophet means here the doctrine of salvation everywhere diffused; for there would be no care nor concern for worshipping were we not taught; for faith, as Paul says, is by hearing; and so prayer proceeds from faith. (Rom. x. 17.) In short, the Prophet means that the knowledge of religion would be through the preaching of the truth, which would rouse all nations to the duty of worshipping God.

He now again confirms what we have also mentioned—that the Jews would have the precedence of all nations; for it appears that God would be among them. We hence see that primacy is not ascribed to the Jews in being leaders to others, because they excelled others by their own virtue or dignity, but because God presided over them. Then God is ever to be sought, though we may avail ourselves of the labours of men, and follow them when they show us the right way. We must ever bear this in mind—that those only exhort truly and honestly, who not only do so by word, but who really prove what they feel by their conduct; according to what the Prophet has said—*Go will I also;* and he says the same now—*Let us go,* or we shall go *with you.* For many there are who are strenuous enough in stimulating others; but their vain garrulity appears evident; for while

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they bid others to run, they are standing still; and while they vehemently encourage others, they themselves delay and take their rest. Now follows—

CHAPTER IX.

1. The burden of the word of the Lord in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, *shall be* toward the Lord.

1. Onus sermonis Iehovæ in terra Chadrak, et Damascus quies ejus; quia ad Iehovam oculus hominis et omnium tribuum Israel.

One thing had escaped my notice in the words of the Prophet—that *great people and strong nations would come.* We have said that "great" rather than "many" ought to be adopted. The latter meaning may indeed be allowed—that the worshippers of God would come from various cities; but as the word עֲצוּמִים, *otsumim*, properly signifies strong, and as it is certain that the Prophet means the same thing by the two words, it is more probable that he speaks of strong and valiant people, as they are not so easily subdued; for the more any one excels in prowess, the more stiff is his neck to undertake the yoke. As then the strong and the brave, and such as are eminent in the world, are not so easily brought to submit to God, the Prophet expressly says, that they shall become teachable, and be made willing, so that pride, as it is usually the case, shall not be a hinderance to them.[1]

I come now to the passage in which the Prophet announces a heavy burden, or a severe and fearful prophecy respecting Syria and other neighbouring nations. I prefer to retain the word "burden," rather than to render it prophecy, as many expositors have done; for though מַשָּׂא, *mesha*, is sometimes taken simply for prophecy, yet there is here, as it appears to me, something particular intended; for the

[1] There seems to be no good reason for considering the two adjectives as describing the same thing. On the contrary, the reverse is most probable. Their number as well as their character is evidently here set forth; they were "many," and "strong," or mighty or powerful. The *Septuagint* and *Jerome* render the word "many," and so do most interpreters. —*Ed.*

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Prophet denounces God's judgment both on Syria and on the surrounding countries, and the word prophecy is not suitable; for to say "the prophecy of the word," would be strange and without meaning. But when he says, *The burden of the word* of God, the sentence is full, and flows well; for he reminds us that his word would not be ineffectual, but full of effect, as it would lie as a burden on Syria and on other countries, which they should not be able to shake off. *The burden* then *of the word of Jehovah;* that is, "I have now a prediction which will be grievous and severe to those heathens who now disturb the Jews, the chosen people."

But this doctrine contains consolation to the godly; for they may hence know that they are safe under God's protection, as he carries on war with their enemies; nay, his vengeance was now prepared against all those who harassed the Jews. As then he had before promised that incredible favour of God which we have noticed, so now he declares that the Church would be safe under the protection of God, inasmuch as vengeance was in readiness for all the ungodly.

But the Prophet mentions here only the cities known to the Jews, for it was enough to refer to them as an example, that the Jews might hence conclude that God would be always the protector of his Church, so that no enemies shall escape unpunished. The Prophet then no doubt mentioned these few cities to the Jews, that they might feel assured that nothing is so strong and impetuous in the world which God cannot easily subdue and lay prostrate. Now as we apprehend the Prophet's object, we shall come to the words.

Some think that the word חדרך, *chedrak*, includes the whole of Syria, which seems to me probable. Others suppose that some notable city is meant, as Damascus is immediately subjoined. But as the matter is uncertain, and as there is no doubt but that the Prophet speaks of the kingdom of Syria, I will not contest the point. Be it then the name of a city or of a country,[1] it is all the same, for the

[1] *Blayney* thinks it to be the name of a Syrian king, and so does *Henderson*. The former quotes *Josephus*, who calls Rehob, in 2 Sam. viii. 3, Ἁδραζος. This prince reigned over a part of Syria called Zobah. If this

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Prophet means that the vengeance of God was impending over the Syrians, and impending in such a manner, that it would not depart from them until they were wholly destroyed. For when he adds that *its rest would be Damascus*, he intimates that God's judgment would not be like a storm, which soon passes away, but that it would be a heavy and burdensome mass, which could not be dissipated, according to what Isaiah says—"The word came on Jacob and fell on Israel;" (Isaiah viii. 9;) that is, what God pronounced against Jacob fell on Israel. He indeed changes the name, but it is the same as though he had said—"When God shall punish Jacob, can the Israelites escape?" for they were the same. The sentence then shall fall, that is, it shall find its own place: in vain will they run here and there to escape. The Jews then will gain nothing by their flight; for the vengeance now denounced by the Lord shall lay hold on them. So also in this place he says, *The burden of the word of Jehovah on the land of Chadrak and Damascus*, the royal city, the metropolis, *shall be its rest*, its dwelling; for the Lord's vengeance will fix its station there, and it cannot be thence removed. In vain then will the Syrians try in various ways to escape, for they must be pressed down by God's hand, until they be laid prostrate. We now then understand in what sense the Prophet says that Damascus would be the rest, the habitation, or the abode of God's vengeance.

He afterwards adds, *For to Jehovah the eye of man.* The particle כִּי, *ki*, is to be taken here, I think, as an adverb of time, "When." There is indeed in reality but little difference, except that the common rendering of it greatly obscures the meaning of the Prophet. But if it be taken as an adverb of time, the passage will read better, *When the eye of man shall be to Jehovah, and of all the tribes of Israel;* that is, when the Jews shall begin to turn to God without any dissimulation, but with real sincerity; then he says, God

be admitted, then the three chief kingdoms of Syria are here named—Zobah, Damascus, and Hamath. But *Henderson* is disposed to think that it is a corruption of the word חדד, the common name of the kings of Syria.—*Ed.*

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will in every way bless them, and raise up his hand against their enemies. The Prophet had before exhorted the Jews to repentance; for they had been too much given to sacrifices and fastings, while no integrity existed among them. So also he shows again that their hypocrisy was an hinderance, which prevented God to manifest his favour to them; and thus he reminds them, that the gate would be opened, and the way made plain and even for God's favour and blessings, whenever they raised their eyes to him, that is, whenever they derived their hopes from him, and fixed on him their dependence. For to direct the eyes to God is nothing else than to look to him so as to fix on him all our thoughts. Some understand by "man" all mortals, but of this I approve not; nor do I doubt but that the Prophet refers to the Jews alone; and doubtless it is not consistent with the context to regard any but the Jews. It is indeed true, that the Prophet speaks here of the calling of the Gentiles, but so as to begin with the Jews; for as they were the first-born, so it was necessary for them to have the precedence. The Prophet then here declares that God would be glorious in his chosen people, and would lay prostrate all the bordering enemies. Then the *eye of man* signifies the same as the eye of the whole people; as though he had said, that after the Jews had begun to lay aside all dissimulation and devoted themselves to God, and cast all their hopes on him, they would then find God sufficiently powerful to lay in the dust all their enemies.

But he afterwards adds, by way of explanation, *and of all the tribes of Israel.* Some give this rendering, "How much more," as though the Prophet reasoned here from the less to the greater. But, as I have already said, this cannot be maintained. First, this explanation is strained, "The eye of man, and especially of all the tribes of Israel;" for the Jews ought to have had the first place: and secondly, the particle ו, *vau*, has no amplifying sense. In short, he intended by a small particle to show that precedence belonged to the Jews. I do not then understand what they mean, who would include all nations in the word "man," and then regard the Prophet as proceeding to mention the tribes of

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Israel. Now what I have stated, that the true servants of God were then few, is probable enough; hence the Prophet here exhorts the whole people to a union in religion. Whenever then the whole tribes of Israel directed their eyes to God, the burden of his word would then come upon Damascus and all the Syrians.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou kindly and graciously extendest thy hand to us, not only to show us once for all the right way, but also to lead us through our whole life, and even to sustain us when wearied, and to raise us up when fallen,—O grant, that we may not be ungrateful for this thy great kindness, but render ourselves obedient to thee; and may we not experience the dreadful power of thy judgment, which thou denouncest on all thine enemies, who are to sustain a vengeance that is to sink them in the abyss of endless perdition; but may we suffer ourselves to be ever raised up by thy hand, until we shall at length reach that blessed rest, to which thou invitest us, and art ready to lead us, where we shall enjoy the fulness of those blessings which have been obtained for us by thy only-begotten Son.—Amen.

[1] This sentence is one of some difficulty. The *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic* versions, give this meaning,—that Jehovah sees, *i. e.*, observes, and therefore judges, all men, as well as the ten tribes of Israel: and this is the view taken by *Grotius*, *Piscator*, *Marckius*, *Dathius*, and *Newcome*. The version of the last is,—

For the eye of Jehovah is *over* man,
And *over* all the tribes of Israel.

Literally it is,

For to Jehovah (belongs) the eye (*i. e.* the seeing) of man
And of all the tribes of Israel.

The "eye" here is supposed to be put for the capacity of seeing, and is rendered by some "spectator—the beholder," or judge,—"For it belongs to Jehovah to be the beholder or the eyer of man," or of mankind, "and of all the tribes of Israel."

But *Kimchi*, *Blayney*, and *Henderson* agree in the view of *Calvin* and of our version. The former meaning seems most suitable to the context, as a reason is given for God's judgments on the surrounding Gentiles, for he observes the conduct of man in general as well as of the tribes of Israel: it is a declaration that his providence extends over all mankind. The paraphrase of *Dathius* is, "For Jehovah by his providence governs all men as well as the tribes of Israel."—*Ed.*

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Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-second.

2. And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

3. And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.

4. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.

2. Etiam Chemath terminabit in ea; Tyrus et Sidon, quia (*vel* quamvis) sapiens sit valdè.

3. Et ædificavit Tyrus munitionem sibi, et coacervavit argentum quasi pulverem, et aurum quasi lutum platearum.

4. Ecce Dominus expellet (*vel*, ad inopiam rediget) eam, et percutiet in mari potentiam ejus, et ipsa igne devorabitur.

ZECHARIAH goes on with the same subject: for he says now, that destruction was nigh all the nations who, being neighbours, harassed the people of God. Yesterday I briefly referred to what he had in view, which was to show, that God would so defend his Church as to execute vengeance on all the ungodly who had unjustly persecuted it; and he spoke of the kingdom of Syria, which was contiguous to Judea. But he now goes farther,—that the wrath of God would extend to the remoter parts of Syria: for Hamath is Antioch the great, and it gave a name to a part of Syria. Damascus was the metropolis of the Syrian empire. But as we have said elsewhere, this word is variously taken in Scripture, but generally for the whole country extending from Judea to the Euphrates and even beyond it. We now then see why Zechariah adds Antioch to Syria, as though he had said, that God would now be the avenger of his people, not only by rewarding bordering cities, but also those afar off. He then passes on to Tyrus and Sidon, which were, as it is well known, cities on the sea-side, and were also nigh to the Jews; for there was no great distance between Galilee and Phœnicia. But as we said yesterday, destruction is denounced on all the nations who had been inimical to the chosen people.

He says that Hamath, or Antioch, would be in *its border*. All nearly with one consent apply this to Judea or to Jerusalem, but they are mistaken; and this whole chapter is misunderstood by all expositors, Jews and others. I indeed

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feel ashamed when I see how widely they have departed from the meaning of the Prophet, and it will be almost a trial to me wholly to reject their mistakes. But it will become plainly evident that none of them have understood what the Prophet means.

They thus explain the passage, that Antioch would be within the borders of Judea, as God would consecrate to himself the lands which were before heathen. But the Prophet no doubt says, as I have already stated, that Antioch would be within the borders of Syria whenever God should visit them all for their wickedness, as though he had said, "God will involve in the same punishment that part of Syria which derives its name from Antioch, because with united forces had all the Syrians assailed his chosen people; though then they are far distant from Judea, they shall yet partake of the same punishment, because they took up arms against his Church." *Hamath* then, or Antioch, *shall be in the borders* of Damascus; that is, it shall not be exempt from the punishment which God will inflict on the bordering kingdom of Syria. And as we advance this view will become more clear.[1]

[1] And also *on* Hamath, *which* bordereth thereby.—*Newcome.* The construction of the whole passage, as given in our version by *Newcome* and *Henderson*, is not satisfactory. The resting-place of the burden was to be Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon. The following then would be its grammatical rendering—

1. The burden of the word of Jehovah on the land of Hadrach;
   And Damascus *shall be* its resting-place,
   (For Jehovah has an eye to see men
   And all the tribes of Israel,)
2. And also Hamath, *which* borders on it,
   Tyre and Zidon *also:* for she is very wise;
3. And built hath Tyre a fortress for herself,
   And has heaped up silver as dust,
   And fine gold as the mire of the streets.
4. Behold, the Lord will dispossess her,
   And smite in the sea her strength,
   And with fire shall she be devoured.

As to "Tyre and Zidon," the expression "very wise" belongs to the latter, and not to the former, as *Henderson* suggests; and then the character or state of Tyre is described in the following lines. This exactly corresponds with the usual style of the Prophets; when two things are mentioned, the last is first explained, and then the first. The boast of wisdom was the character of Zidon; confidence in its strength and riches is what is ascribed to Tyre.—*Ed.*

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He adds, *Tyrus and Sidon, though it be very wise.* The particle כִּי, *ki*, is used, which is properly causal; but we may gather from many parts of Scripture that it is taken as an adversative. Either meaning would not, however, be unsuitable, that God would take vengeance on the Sidonians and Tyrians, *because* they were very crafty, or *though* they were cautious, and seemed skilful and cunning in managing their affairs: they were not however to escape God's judgment. If the former meaning be approved, it was the Prophet's object to show, that when men are extremely provident and labour to fortify themselves by crafty means, God is opposed to them; for it is his peculiar office to take the crafty by their own craftiness. As then too much cunning and craftiness displease God, it may suitably be said, that the Tyrians and Sidonians were now summoned before God's tribunal, because they were extremely crafty, as is commonly the case with merchants in wealthy and maritime cities; for they learn much cunning by the many frauds which they are almost compelled to use. Since then the Sidonians and Tyrians were such, it was right to denounce vengeance on them. But the other view is equally suitable, that all the craft of Tyrus and Sidon would not prevent God from executing his judgment. As to myself, I think that a reason is here given why God threatens ruin to the Tyrians and Sidonians, even because they were given to crafty artifices, and thus circumvented all their neighbours.

But he uses a good word by way of concession; for all who intend to deceive cover their craft with the name of wisdom or prudence. "They wish to be cautious," when yet they wickedly deceive others by their intrigues and frauds. A concession then is made as to the word wise: but the Prophet at the same time teaches us, that this kind of wisdom is hateful to God, when by the loss of others we increase our own wealth: for an explanation immediately follows—

For Tyrus has for herself built a fortress. The Prophet shows by these words how very cautious or prudent the Tyrians had been; for they fortified themselves by strongholds, and thought themselves to be beyond the reach of danger. He then adds, *and heaped to herself silver as dust, and gold*

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as the mire of the streets, that is, accumulated wealth above measure; for he mentions "dust" and "mire" as signifying an immense heap; as though he had said, "They have worthless heaps of silver and gold for their vast abundance." He no doubt includes silver and gold in the fortress which he mentions; for I do not confine the word fortress only to towers and strongholds; but the Prophet, as I think, states generally, that Tyrus was so furnished and fortified with wealth, forces, and all kinds of defences, that it thought itself impregnable.

There is a striking correspondence between צור, *tsur*, and מצור, *metsur*. צור, *Tsur*, he says, has built מצור, *metsur*, a fortress. It is a paronomasia worthy of notice, but cannot be retained in Latin.

He now declares that God would be an avenger: *Behold*, he says, *Jehovah will possess*, or cause to possess, as some read, but they are mistaken, owing to the two meanings of the verb ירש, *iresh*, which means to possess and also to expel or impoverish;[1] for interpreters think that a hope of favour and of salvation is here given to these cities, and say that they are now chosen by God as a possession. But this is wholly contrary to the intention of the Prophet, as it appears more clearly from a view of each clause.

Jehovah then *will expel her, and smite her strength.* The Prophet no doubt alludes to what he had already said—that Tyrus had heaped silver and gold; now on the other hand he declares that Tyrus would be exposed to a scattering; for the heap of gold and silver it had laid up would be dissipated by God: *he will* then *dissipate;* or if one chooses to

[1] This verb is here confounded with רש, which means to impoverish in Hiphil. But the Hiphil of ירש has the idea of expelling or driving out; it means literally to cause one to be inherited or heired, that is, by making another to succeed in his place. To dispossess, according to *Henderson*, rather than to cast out, according to our version and *Newcome*, is the idea of the original. The explanation here disapproved by *Calvin*, which is wholly inconsistent with the whole passage, has been derived from the *Septuagint*, who have rendered the verb as though it were in Kal, κληρονομήσει. The *Targum* gives it the idea of driving or casting out. The Greek fathers, *Theodoret* and *Cyril*, not knowing Hebrew, could give no other explanation. Similar has been the source of not a few false interpretations given by the fathers.—*Ed.*

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take the verb as meaning to reduce to want, the contrast would thus be suitable—God *will* then *impoverish*, or expel her. Afterwards he adds, *In the sea will he smite her strength.* As Tyrus, we know, was surrounded by the sea, the Prophet by this reference shows God's power in taking vengeance on her; for the sea would be no restraint or hinderance to God, when he resolved to enter there. The Tyrians, indeed, thought themselves safe from every hostile attack, for they had the sea on every side as a triple wall and a triple rampart. Nor was Tyrus altogether like Venice; for Venice is situated in a stagnant sea, while the situation of Tyrus was in a very deep sea, as historians plainly show who relate its assault by Alexander the Great. It had indeed been before taken and plundered; but he did what none had ever thought of—he filled up a part of the sea, so that Tyrus was no longer an island.

We now see what Zechariah had in view, when he threatened ruin to Tyrus, though its strength was in the midst of the sea, beyond the reach of fortune, as it is commonly said. *And she shall be consumed by fire.* He means that Tyrus would not only be plundered, but wholly demolished; for we know that even the strongest things are consumed by fire. It follows—

5. Ashkelon shall see *it*, and fear; Gaza also *shall see it*, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

5. Videbit Ascalon et timebit; et Aza, et dolebit valdè; et Ekron, quia confusus erit (*aut*, pudefactus) aspectus ejus; et peribit rex ab Aza (*hoc est*, Gaza,) et Ascalon non habitabitur.

In this verse also is described the devastation of those cities which the Prophet names; as though he had said, that all those cities which had risen up against God's people were devoted to extreme vengeance. Zechariah says that none would be exempt from punishment, since the hand of God would be stretched forth, and extend everywhere, so that it might be easily concluded, that all those who had unjustly harassed the Church would be thus rewarded for their cruelty. This is the import of what is here said.

He says that *Ascalon would see and fear;* for at that time

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the Ascalonites were hostile to the Jews. He speaks the same of Aza, which the Greeks called Gaza; but they were deceived in thinking it was a name given to it by Cambyses, for the reason that Gaza means a treasure in the Persian language. This is childish. It is indeed certain that it has been owing to a change in the pronunciation of one letter; for ע, *oin*, is guttural among the Hebrews, and was formerly so pronounced, like our g: as they called Amorrah, Gomorrah, so Aza is Gaza. We have spoken of this elsewhere.

Now it appears from geography that these cities were near the sea, or not far from the sea, and having this advantage they gathered much wealth. But as wealth commonly generates pride and cruelty, all these nations were very troublesome to the Jews. This is the reason why the Prophet says that *grief* would come on Gaza, and then on Ekron and on other cities. He adds, *Because ashamed shall be her expectation.* There is no doubt but they had placed their trust in Tyrus, which was thought to be impregnable; for though enemies might have subdued the whole land, there a secure station remained. Since then all looked to Tyrus, the Prophet says that their hope would be confounded, when Tyrus was overthrown and destroyed. The sum of the whole is, that the beginning of the vengeance would be at Tyrus, which was situated as it were beyond the world, so as not to be exposed to any evils. He says then that the beginning of the calamity would be in that city, to which no misfortunes, as it was thought, could find an access. And then he mentions that other cities, on seeing Tyrus visited with ruin, would be terrified, as their confidence would be thus subverted. He afterwards adds, *Perish shall the king from Gaza, and Ascalon shall not be inhabited;* that is, such a change will take place as will almost obliterate the appearance of these cities. It follows—

6. And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod; and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.	6. Et habitabit extraneus in Azdoth, (*hoc est* Azoti, *et Azdoth verterunt Græci Azotum,*) et excidam superbiam Philistim.

In this verse the Prophet denounces a similar ruin on Azotus, and the whole land of the Philistines, or on the

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whole land of Palestine. For what interpreters say, that the Jews would dwell at Azotus as strangers, that is, though they had previously been counted aliens, is to reach neither heaven nor earth. The Prophet on the contrary means, that after the destruction of these cities, if any inhabitants remained, they would be like strangers, without any certain habitation. The Prophet then mentions the effect, in order to show that the country would be waste and desolate, so as to contain no safe or fixed dwellings for its inhabitants. Some render it spurious, as it is rendered in some other places; and they understand it of the Jews, because they had been before in a mean condition, as though they were like a spurious race. But their opinion is probable, who derive ממזר, *memezar*, from זור, *zur*, which means to peregrinate; and they quote other instances, in which the double מם, *mem*, is used in the formation of a noun; and it is easy to prove, from many passages of Scripture, that ממזר, *memezar*, means a stranger.[1] And if any one carefully considers the design of the Prophet, he will see the truth of what I have said—that is, that his object is to show, that all the inhabitants of Azotus, and of the land of the Philistines, would be like lodgers, because all places would be desolate through the slaughter and devastations of enemies. As then Ashdod and Palestine had been before noted for the number of their people, the Prophet says that all the cities of

[1] That this is its meaning is generally admitted, as given by the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, and the *Syriac* version, and adopted by *Grotius*, *Newcome*, *Blayney*, and *Henderson*. *Lee* accounts for the double מ by deriving the word from מן, from, עם, people, and זר, a foreigner, or stranger. The poetical singular is used for the plural, as is the case in the following verse. The whole passage may be thus rendered—

6. And dwell shall a stranger in Ashdod;
(For I will cut off the pride of the Philistines;)
7. And I will remove his blood from his mouth,
And his abominations from between his teeth,
And left shall he be, even he, for our God;
So that he shall be as a chief in Judah,
And Ekron as a Jebusite.

The "his" and "he" in this last verse is the "stranger" in verse 6; and that is used in a collective sense, properly rendered strangers, or foreigners, ἀλλογενεις by the Septuagint; so that the plural, in all these instances, might suitably be adopted in a translation—The "pride of the Philistines" was cut off by introducing strangers into their cities; and this line may be considered as parenthetic.—*Ed.*

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Palestine, and the city Ashdod, would be deserted, except that there would be there a few scattered and wandering inhabitants, like those who sojourn in a strange land. It follows—

7. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, *shall be* for our God; and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.

7. Et auferam sanguines ejus ex ore ejus, et abominationes ejus è medio dentium ejus; et qui residuus erit, etiam ipse, erit Deo nostro; et erit quasi dux in Iehuda, et Ekron quasi Iebusæus.

Interpreters do also pervert the whole of this verse; and as to the following verse, that is, the next, they do nothing else but lead the readers far astray from its real meaning. God says now, that he will *take away blood from the mouth* of enemies; as though he had said, "I will check their savage disposition, that they may not thus swallow down the blood of my people." For here is not described any change, as though they were to become a different people, as though the Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Philistines, and other nations, who had been given to plunders, and raged cruelly against the miserable Jews, were to assume the gentleness of lambs: this the Prophet does not mean; but he introduces God here as armed with power to repress the barbarity of their enemies, and to prevent them from cruelly assaulting the Church.

I will take away blood, he says, *from their mouth;* and he says, from their *mouth*, because they had been inured in cruelty. I will cause, then, that they may not as hitherto satiate their own lust for blood. He adds, *and abominations*, that is, I will take *from the midst of their teeth* their abominable plunders; for he calls all those things abominations which had been taken by robbery and violence.[1] And he compares them to wild beasts, who not only devour the flesh,

[1] *Kimchi*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, and others, have given the same view; but *Jerome*, *Marckius*, *Newcome*, *Blayney*, *Henderson*, and *Hengstenberg*, regard idolatry as intended here, the "blood" being that of the victims which the heathens drank, and the "abominations" being the things sacrificed to idols. What seems strongly to favour the view taken by *Calvin* is the phraseology; the metaphor being that of a wild beast devouring his prey, and of the prey being taken from him: this certainly ill comports with the notion of putting an end to idolatrous practices.—*Ed.*

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but drink also the blood and tear asunder the raw carcase. In short, he shows here, under the similitude of wolves and leopards and wild boars, how great had been the inhumanity of enemies to the Church; for they devoured the miserable Jews, as wild and savage beasts are wont to devour their prey.

It afterwards follows, *and he who shall be a remnant.* Some translate, "and he shall be left," and explain it of the Philistines and other nations of whom mention is made. But the Prophet doubtless means the Jews; for though few only had returned to their country as remnants from their exile, he yet says that this small number would be sacred to God, and that all who remained would be, as it were, leaders in Judah, however despised they might have been. For there was no superiority even in the chief men among them; only they spontaneously paid reverence to Zerubbabel, who was of the royal seed, and to Joshua on account of the priesthood; while yet all of them were in a low and mean condition. But the Prophet says, that the most despised of them would be leaders and chiefs in Judah. We now perceive the Prophet's meaning; for after having predicted the ruin that was nigh all the enemies of the Church, he now sets forth the end and use of his prophecy; for God would provide for the good of the miserable Jews, who had been long exiles, and who, though now restored to their country, were yet exposed to the ill treatment of all, and also despised and made even the objects of scorn to their enemies. *He* then *who shall be a remnant, even he shall be for our God,* as though he had said, "Though the Lord had for a time repudiated you as well as your fathers, when he drove you here and there and scattered you, yet now God has gathered you, and for this end—that you may be his people: ye shall then be the peculiar people of God, though ye are small in number and contemptible in your condition."[1]

[1] The explanation of this clause, though countenanced by some others, cannot yet be admitted. There is nothing in the text to justify the transition from the "stranger" in verse 6, and who is spoken of in this verse, to the Jewish nation. The foreigners or strangers inhabiting Ashdod are no doubt intended. So thought *Theodoret, Drusius, Grotius, Blayney,* and *Newcome;* and such is the view of *Henderson,* only that he applies

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Then he adds, these remnants *shall be as leaders in Judah*, that is, God will raise them to the highest honour; though they are now without any dignity, they shall yet be made by God almost all of them princes. It then follows, *And Ekron shall be as a Jebusite.* Some explain thus—that the citizens of Ekron would dwell in Jerusalem, which the Jebusites had formerly possessed; and others give another view, but nothing to the purpose. The Prophet speaks not here of God's favour to the citizens of Ekron, but on the contrary shows the difference between God's chosen people and heathen nations, who gloried in their own good fortune: hence he says, that they should be like the Jebusites, for they at length would have to endure a similar destruction. We indeed know, that the Jebusites had been driven out of that town, when Jerusalem was afterwards built; but it was done late, even under David. As then they had long held that place and were at length dislodged, this is the reason why the Prophet says, that though the citizens of Ekron seemed now to be in the very middle of the holy land, they would be made like the Jebusites, for the Lord would drive away and destroy them all. He afterwards adds—

8. And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth; and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

8. Et castra metabor ad domum meam ab exercitu, à transeunte et redeunte; et non transibit super eos amplius exactor; quia nunc vidi oculis meis.

He concludes what he had been speaking of,—that God would be the guardian of his chosen people, so as to repel

the passage to the Philistines generally, and not to the strangers in Ashdod. To consider the foreigner or stranger as a "ruler," seems not right.

This prophecy was fulfilled, says *Grotius*, in the time of the Maccabees, and he refers to *Josephus*, xii. 12, and to 1 Macc. v. 66; and also in the time of Alexander, when many of the cities of the Philistines, especially Ashdod and Gaza, were conquered by the Jews, when many of them became proselytes to Judaism.

The explanation of *Blayney* as to the latter part of the verse is as follows: that the stranger or strangers in Ashdod should be on the same footing as a privileged citizen in Judah, but that the Ekronite, the natural born Philistine, should be as a Jebusite in Jerusalem, deprived of the privileges which he had when the country was his own. This would be to "cut off the pride of the Philistines."—*Ed.*

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on every side the violent assaults of enemies. It is then the same as though he had said, "though the Church is not strongly fortified, it shall yet be impregnable, for God's protection is of more value than all human strength, than all aids and helps." God then compares himself here to a moat and a bulwark, and other kinds of fortresses, *I will be*, he says, *a camp to my house*. He mentions here house rather than city, that the Jews might feel confident that there was sufficient help in God alone, though they might dwell in a private house or in a cottage. "My Church, though it be a small house, will I yet surround with my defences, so as to render it safe from all harm."

He says, *from the army;* and then, *from him that passes through, and from him that returns*. He places the army in opposition to the house; and thus he exhorts the Jews, not to regard their own strength, but to know that God alone is far better than all armies. Though then the whole world united together and collected all its forces, he still bids them to be calmly confident, for God alone would be sufficient to put to flight all armies. And according to the same meaning he refers to him that *passes through* and who *returns;* as though he had said, "Though enemies may wander through the whole earth and occupy it from one end to the other, yet I will cause my house to remain safe. By him that *returns*, he intimates, that though enemies renewed their armies the second and the third time, yet God's strength would be always sufficient to check their assaults. In a word, what is here taught is the perpetuity of the safety of God's people, for he will never be wearied in defending them, nor will his power be ever lessened. It often happens that those who with the best intention succour their neighbours, by degrees grow wearied, or they may have their efforts prevented by various events; but the Prophet tells us, that God is not like men, wearied or unable, after having once helped his people and repelled their enemies; for he will be *always* ready to aid his people, were enemies to renew the battle a hundred times.

By *enemy* then he means forces; by *passing through*, the obstinate cruelty of enemies; and by *returning*, new wars,

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which one undertakes, when disappointed of his hope, by collecting a new army and repairing his strength.[1]

At length he adds, *And pass shall no more the extortioner through them.* This sentence explains what he had figuratively expressed,—that though the Jews had been exposed to the will of their enemies, yet God would not hereafter suffer them to be unjustly treated and to be plundered as they had been: for under the name of extortioner he includes all plunderers who had spoiled the miserable Jews of their goods. Then he says, *For I have seen with mine eyes.* It would be frigid, nay insipid, to explain this clause as some do, that is, as though the Prophet had said,—that he related what had been made known to him from above: for on the contrary God testifies here, that he had seen with his eyes how

[1] Perhaps this is too great a refinement. *Marckius* gives this meaning, that the "army" is a marshalled force, and that the passer through and the returner are individual enemies. But our version is very literal, only that passing through and returning may be applied to the army,—

And I will be a camp to mine house from an host,
From it when passing through and from it when returning.

Or literally,

From the passing through and from the returning (*i. e.* host.)

Newcome's version is,

And I will encamp about mine house *with* an army.
So that none shall pass through or return.

This is neither grammatically correct, nor consistent with posterior facts; for armies did pass through the land, though the house or temple of God was not invaded. *Henderson's* version is in substance the same with what I have given,

And I will encamp about my house because of the army,
Both when it passeth through and when it returneth.

The following line may be thus rendered—

And come upon them shall no more the oppressor.

The *Septuagint* give for oppressor ἐξιλαύνων, the driver away or banisher; the *Targum* has "tyrant," which *Grotius* adopts. "Oppressor" is the word used by *Drusius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. It has been said that no foreign oppressor, like the Babylonians, had invaded the land from this time to the advent of Christ, though the Jews had suffered much both from the Egyptian and Syrian kings; but the language here is so strong, that the promise must be considered as conditional, as all those promises were which were connected with their national covenant. "No more" has no limit: hence the promise must be viewed as conditional.

"This promise," says *Dr. M'Caul*, "is of the same nature as most of the others made to Israel; that is, conditional upon their obedience. Moses has repeatedly laid down this as the general principle of God's dealings with the Jews, especially in reference to the possession of blessing and prosperity in the land. (Deut. xxx. 15-18.)"—*Ed.*

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cruelly and disgracefully the Jews had been treated. And some, while they regard God as the speaker, very unwisely give this explanation,—that God already foresaw what he would do. But evidently God assigns here, as I have said, a reason why he purposed to deliver the Jews from injuries, and for the future to keep them safe and defend them; and the reason given is, because he saw what grievous wrongs they were suffering. And the Prophet speaks according to the usual manner adopted in Scripture; for though nothing is hid from God's eyes, yet he is rightly said to see what he takes notice of, and what he declares must be accounted for before his tribunal. Though then God saw even before the creation of the world what was to take place afterward in all ages, yet he is rightly said to see what he begins to call to judgment. The Jews indeed thought they were neglected by him; for the Scripture everywhere says, that God closes his eyes, is asleep, lies down, forgets, cares not, when he hides himself and appears not as the avenger of wrongs. Hence, on the other hand, the Lord declares here, that he saw with his eyes those things which were not to be tolerated, inasmuch as enemies had passed all bounds, and had so far advanced and indulged in wantonness, that their pride and cruelty were become intolerable.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as the ungodly at this day take such delight in their own filth, that the weakness of our faith is somewhat disturbed by their pride and arrogance,—O grant, that we may learn to lift up our eyes to thy judgments, and patiently wait for what is now concealed, until thou puttest forth the power of thine hand and destroyest all those who now cruelly rage and shed innocent blood, and persecute thy Church in every way they can: and may we so cast ourselves on thy care, so as not to doubt but that thou art sufficient for our safety, and that thou wilt at length make evident what thou hast testified, even that there is so much protection in thine hand, as that we may safely boast that we are safe and blessed, as long as thou art pleased to exercise care over us, until we shall at length reach that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-third.

9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

9. Exulta valdè filia Sion, jubila filia Ierusalem: Ecce, rex tuus veniet tibi, justus et servatus ipse (*vel*, idem,) pauper, et equitans super asinum, et super pullum filium asinarum.

The Prophet here briefly shows the manner in which the Church was to be restored; for a king from the tribe and family of David would again arise, to restore all things to their ancient state. And this is the view given everywhere by the Prophets; for the hope of the ancient people, as our hope, was founded on Christ. Inasmuch then as things were as yet in a decayed state among the Jews, Zechariah here testifies that God had not in vain formerly spoken so often by his servants concerning the advent of a Redeemer, but that a firm hope was to be entertained, until the prophecies were in due time fulfilled. As then Zechariah has been hitherto speaking of the prosperous and happy state of the Church, he now confirms what he had said; and this was especially necessary, for they could not, as I have already said, have raised up their minds so as to feel confidence as to their salvation, without having a Mediator set before them. But as the faithful were then in great grief and sorrow, Zechariah here exhorts them to perseverance: for by bidding them to *rejoice greatly*, and even to *shout for joy*, he no doubt intimates, that though grief and sorrow took fast hold on their hearts, they ought yet to strive manfully, so as to receive the favour of God; for they must have a hundred times succumbed under their evils, had they not Christ before their eyes; not indeed in a carnal manner, but in the mirror of the word; as the faithful see in that what is far distant and even hidden from them.

We now then understand, first, why the Prophet here makes such a sudden reference to Christ; and secondly, why he does not simply exhort the faithful to rejoice, but encourages them greatly to exult as though they were already in a safe and most happy condition.

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By the word *king*, the Prophet intimates, that except they thought God unfaithful in his promises, they were to entertain hope, until the kingdom of David, then apparently fallen, arose again. As God then would have himself acknowledged faithful, and his adoption counted fixed and ratified in the Messiah, it is no wonder that the Prophet now briefly refers to a king; for this mode of speaking was well known by the people. And we have also seen elsewhere, that when the Prophets speak of the safety of the Church, they mention a king, because the Lord designed to gather again the dispersed Church under one head, even Christ. And no doubt there would ever remain a dreadful dispersion, were not Christ the bond of union. He then says that a *king* would come. But he speaks not as of a king unknown; he only reminds them that God would be true and faithful to his promises. Now since the whole law, and adoption, must have vanished away, except Christ came, his coming ought to have been patiently waited for.

Further, that God's children might be more confirmed, he says also that this king would come to the people, *the daughter of Sion*, as though he had said, that God, for the sake of the whole Church, had fixed the royal throne in the family of David: for if the king was to come, that he might indulge in his own triumphs, and be contented with pomps and pleasures, it would have been but a small and wholly barren consolation: but as God in determining to send the Messiah, provided for the safety of the whole Church, which he had promised to do, the people might here derive solid confidence. It is not then a matter of small moment, when the Prophet teaches us, that the king would come to *Sion* and to *Jerusalem;* as though he had said, "This king shall not come for his own sake like earthly kings, who rule according to their own caprice, or for their own advantage:" but he reminds us, that his kingdom would be for the common benefit of the whole people, for he would introduce a happy state.

He afterwards states what sort of king he was to be. He first names him *just*, and then *preserved* or *saved*. As to the word, just, it ought, I think, to be taken in an active

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sense, and so the word which follows: *Just* then and *saved* is called the king of the chosen people, for he would bring to them righteousness and salvation. Both words depend on this clause,—that there would come a king to Sion. If he came privately for himself, he might have been for himself just and saved, that is, his righteousness and salvation might have belonged to himself or to his own person: but as he came for the sake of others, and has been for them endued with righteousness and salvation; then the righteousness and salvation of which mention is made here, belong to the whole body of the Church, and ought not to be confined to the person of the king. Thus is removed every contention, with which many have foolishly, or at least, very inconsiderately, wearied themselves; for they have thought that the Jews cannot be otherwise overcome, and that their perverseness cannot be otherwise checked, than by maintaining, that נוֹשֵׁעַ, *nusho*, must be taken actively; and they have quoted some passages of Scripture, in which a verb in Niphal is taken in an active sense.[1] But what need there is of un-

[1] The *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, and the *Vulgate*, render the word actively σωζων—Saviour. It is so taken by *Bochart*, *Grotius*, *Marckius*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. The reason given is, that there are instances of several verbs in Niphal having an active meaning. This is true; but this verb is found nineteen times in Niphal besides here, and invariably in a passive sense. This is quite sufficient to settle its meaning. *Kimchi*, *Glassius*, and *Cocceius* take this view. The last says that the reference is to his deliverance from his sufferings and his death. It is singular that this verse, at least a part of it, is quoted, and applied to Christ shortly before his crucifixion. Matt. xxi. 4, 5. The two verses, 9th and 10th, are in a striking manner connected; there is a contrast between the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th, and a correspondence between the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 9th. The king shall ride lowly on an ass,—and the chariot and the horse shall be cut off; he shall be saved or preserved,—and the battle-bow shall be destroyed; then the correspondence,—he is righteous, *i.e.*, just and faithful to his gracious promises,—and he shall speak peace to the nations; he is King,—and his dominion shall be from sea to sea. The two first lines are not to be included in the comparison,—

9. Exult thou greatly, daughter of Zion;
Shout thou daughter of Jerusalem:
Behold thy King, he shall come to thee;
Just, and saved shall he be;
Lowly, and he shall ride on an ass,
Even on a colt, the foal of an ass:
10. And cut off shall I the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem;

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dertaking such disputes, when we may well agree on the subject? I then concede to the Jews, that Christ is saved or preserved, and that he is said to be so by Zechariah.

But we must see what this salvation is which belongs to Christ. This we may gather from what is said by the Prophet. We are not then to contend here about words, but to consider what the subject is, that is, that a just and saved king comes to his chosen: and we know that Christ had no need of salvation himself. As then he was sent by the Father to gather a chosen people, so he is said to be saved because he was endued with power to preserve or save them. We then see that all controversy is at an end, if we refer those two words to Christ's kingdom, and it would be absurd to confine them to the person of one man, for the discourse is here concerning a royal person; yea, concerning the public condition of the Church, and the salvation of the whole body. And certainly when we speak of men, we say not that a king is safe and secure, when he is expelled from his kingdom, or when his subjects are disturbed by enemies, or when they are wholly destroyed. When therefore a king, deprived of all authority, sees his subjects miserably oppressed, he is not said to be saved or preserved. But the case of Christ, as I have said, is special; for he does not exercise dominion for his own sake, but for the preservation of his whole people. Hence with regard to grammar, I can easily allow that Christ is called just and saved, passively; but as to the matter itself, he is just with reference to his people, and also saved or preserved, for he brings with him salvation to the lost; for we know that the Jews were then almost in a hopeless state.

He however at the same time adds, that the king would be saved, not because he would be furnished with arms and forces, or that he would defend his people after the manner of men; for he says, that he would be *poor*.[1] He must

> And cut off shall be the bow of war;
> And he will speak peace to the nations;
> And his dominion *shall be* from sea to sea,
> And from the river to the extremities of the land.—*Ed.*

[1] *Pauper*, עָנִי, rendered "πραὺς, meek," by the *Septuagint*; "humble," by *Newcome*; and "lowly," by *Blayney* and *Henderson*, and also by *Kimchi*, and the *Targum*. It may either mean a depressed and poor con-

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then be otherwise preserved safe than earthly princes are wont to be, who fill their enemies with fear, who fortify their borders, prepare an army, and set up every defence to ward off assaults. Zechariah teaches us, that Christ would be otherwise preserved, as he would prove superior to his enemies through a divine power. As then he is poor, he must be exposed to all kinds of injuries; for we see, that when there is no earthly fortress, all the wicked immediately fly together as it were to the prey. If Christ then is poor, he cannot preserve his own people, nor can he prosper in his kingdom. It hence follows, that he must be furnished with celestial power, in order to continue himself safe, and in order to prevent harm to his Church; and this is what Zechariah will presently tell us, and more clearly express. It is now sufficient briefly to state his object.

He afterwards adds, *Riding on an ass, the colt, the foal of an ass.*[1] Some think that the ass is not mentioned here to denote poverty, for they who excelled in power among the people were then in the habit of riding on asses. But it seems to me certain, that the Prophet added this clause to explain the word עָנִי, *oni*, poor; as though he had said, that the king of whom he spoke would not be distinguished by a magnificent and splendid appearance like earthly princes, but would appear in a sordid or at least in an ordinary condition, so as not to differ from the humblest and lowest of the people.[2] He then bids the faithful to raise up their eyes to heaven, in order to come to the true knowledge of

dition, or, as *Blayney* says, "the humility of his temper." Both were true as to the king mentioned here. He was poor in condition, riding on a colt, and lowly also in mind, of which his procession was an evidence.—*Ed.*

[1] Literally it is, "the foal of she-asses," which *Kimchi* explains, "the foal of one of the she-asses," and adduces Judges xii. 7, as an instance, where "in the cities of Gilead" means "in one of the cities of Gilead." It is singular in the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, and the *Syriac*. The word is regarded by *Grotius* as including both sexes, "the foal of asses," a pure foal, not a mule, its father and mother being of the asinine kind. So *Newcome* renders the phrase, "the foal of asses." The probability is, that as the early versions give the singular, and as there seems to be no reason for the plural, it is a typographical mistake.—*Ed.*

[2] *Newcome* suggests another reason, "As horses are used in war, Christ may be supposed by this action to have shown the humble and peaceable nature of his kingdom."—*Ed.*

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Christ's kingdom, and to feel assured that righteousness and salvation are to be expected from him. How so? Because he will be accompanied with nothing that may strike men with fear, but will serve as an humble and obscure individual. We may also here add, that righteousness and salvation must be understood according to the character of Christ's kingdom; for as the kingdom of Christ is not temporal or what passes away, we conclude that the righteousness he possesses is to be perpetual, together with the salvation which he brings. But I am not disposed ingeniously to speak here of the righteousness of faith; for I think, on the contrary, that by the word is meant here a right order of things, as all things were then among the people in a state of confusion; and this might be easily proved by many passages of Scripture.

The sum of the whole is, that the predictions by which God gave to his chosen people a hope of redemption were not vain or void; for at length in due time Christ, the son of David, would come forth,—secondly, that this king would be just, and saved or preserved; for he would restore things into order which were in a disgraceful state of confusion,—and thirdly, he adds, that this king would be poor; for he would ride on an ass, and would not appear in great eminence, nor be distinguished for arms, or for riches, or for splendour, or for number of soldiers, or even for royal trappings which dazzle the eyes of the vulgar: he shall *ride on an ass.*

This prophecy we know was fulfilled in Christ; and even some of the Jews are constrained to confess that the Prophet's words can be justly applied to none else. Yet they do not acknowledge as the Christ of God the Son of Mary; but they think that the Prophet speaks of their imaginary Messiah. Now we, who are fully persuaded and firmly maintain that the Christ promised has appeared and performed his work, do see that it has not been said without reason that he would come *poor* and *riding on an ass.* It was indeed designed that there should be a visible symbol of this very thing; for he mounted an ass while ascending into Jerusalem a short time before his death. It is indeed true,

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that the Prophet's words are metaphorical: when he says, *Come shall a king, riding on an ass*, the words are figurative; for the Prophet means, that Christ would be as it were an obscure person, who would not make an appearance above that of the common people. That this is the real meaning is no doubt true. But yet there is no reason why Christ should not afford an example of this in mounting an ass.

I will adduce a similar instance: it is said in the twenty-second Psalm, 'They have cast lots on my garments.' The metaphor there is no doubt apparent, which means that David's enemies divided his spoils. He therefore complains that those robbers, by whom he had been unjustly treated, had deprived him of all that he had: and fulfilled has this been in a literal manner, so that the most ignorant must acknowledge that it has not in vain been foretold. We now then understand how well do these things agree—that the Prophet speaks metaphorically of the humble appearance of Christ; and yet that the visible symbol is so suitable, that the most ignorant must acknowledge that no other Christ but he who has already appeared is to be expected.

I omit many frivolous things, which in no degree tend to explain the Prophet's meaning, but even pervert it, and destroy faith in prophecy: for some think that Christ rode on an ass, and also on a colt, because he was to govern the Jews, who had been previously accustomed to bear the yoke of the law, and that he was also to bring the Gentiles to obedience, who had been hitherto untameable. But these things are very frivolous. It is enough for us to know what the Prophet means. It afterwards follows—

10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth.

10. Et excidam quadrigas (*vel*, currum) ab Ephraim, et equum ab Ierusalem, et excidetur arcus bellicus (arcus belli;) et loquetur pacem ad gentes; et imperium ejus à mari usque ad mare, et à fluvio usque ad terminos terræ.

The Prophet here expresses more clearly what he had briefly referred to by the word *poor*, and by the metaphor which we have explained. Hence he says, that there would

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be no horses, no chariots, no bows, no warlike instruments in Christ's kingdom; for tranquillity would prevail in it. The sum of the whole is, that Christ and his people would not be kept safe and secure by human defences, by means of many soldiers and of similar helps being at hand; but that God would restrain, and even compose and allay all warlike commotions, so that there would be no need of such aids. We now understand the Prophet's design.

But we must notice the language here used. God declares here that he would be the giver of peace, so that the Messiah would continue safe in his kingdom; *I will cut off*, he says; for it might have been objected—"If he is to be poor, what hope can there be of safety?" The answer is, because it will be God's work to restrain all the assaults of enemies. He means, in short, that the Messiah's kingdom would be safe, because God from heaven would check all the rage of enemies, so that however disposed they might be to do harm, they would yet find themselves held captive by the hidden bridle of God, so as not to be able to move a finger.

But after having said that the Jews and Israelites would be safe, though stripped naked of all defences, he adds, *He will speak peace to the nations;* that is, though he will not use threats or terrors, nor bring forth great armies, yet the nations will obey him; for there will be no need of employing any force. To speak peace then to the nations means, that they will calmly hear, though not terrified nor threatened. Some with more ingenuity make the meaning to be —that Christ, who reconciles the Father to us, will proclaim this favour of reconciliation; but the Prophet, as I think, with more simplicity, says, that Christ would be content with his own word, inasmuch as the Gentiles would become obedient, and quietly submit to his authority.[1] The import of the whole is, that Christ would so rule far and wide, that the farthest would live contentedly under his protection, and not cast off the yoke laid on them.

He states in the last place, that his dominion would be

[1] To "speak peace" is to announce or proclaim peace, and not to produce peace. It is not to render people peaceable, but to declare the message of peace to them. It is the promulgation of the gospel.—*Ed.*

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from sea to sea, that is, from the Red sea to the Syrian sea, towards Cilicia, *and from the river*, that is, Euphrates, *to the extreme borders of the earth.* By the *earth* we are not to understand the whole world, as some interpreters have unwisely said; for the Prophet no doubt mentioned those places already known to the Jews. For we know that remarkable oracle—"He shall reign from sea to sea." (Psalm lxxii. 8.) But God speaks of David only, and the words are the same as here; and there was no oracle more commonly known among the Jews.[1] The Prophet, then, who adduces here nothing new, only reminds the Jews of what they had long ago heard, and repeats, as it were, word for word, what was familiar to them all. For we must bear in mind what I said at the beginning—that the Prophet here strengthens the minds of the godly, and on this account, because the Messiah, on whose coming was founded the gratuitous adoption of the people, as well as their hope of salvation, had not yet appeared. We now then understand the real meaning of this passage. He then adds—

11. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.	11. Etiam tu, in sanguine fœderis tui emisi vinctos tuos è puteo, in quo non erat aqua.

Here he applies his former doctrine to its right use, so that the faithful might emerge from their sorrow, and come to that joy which he had before encouraged them to entertain. He then addresses Jerusalem, as though he had said, "There is no reason for thee to torment thyself with perplexed and anxious thoughts, for I will accomplish what I have promised—that I would become a deliverer to my people." For this doubt might have occurred to them—"Why does he exhort us to rejoice, while the Church of God is still in part captive, and while those who have returned

[1] The reference as to the "sea" may be also made to Ex. xxiii. 31; and as to the "river" to Deut. xi. 24. The land promised to the Israelites is no doubt what is here described, and *Newcome* renders the last clause "to the uttermost parts of the land." Though *Henderson* admits that the words are originally "descriptive of the utmost bounds of the Hebrew kingdom," yet he thinks that they are to be taken here in their widest meaning, as including the whole earth.—*Ed.*

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to their country are miserably and cruelly harassed by their enemies?" To this objection Zechariah answers in the person of God—that God would be able to deliver them, though they were sunk in the deepest gulf. We hence see how this verse harmonises with the other verses: he had before spoken of the happy state of the Church under Christ as its king; but as the condition of the people then was very hard and miserable, he adds, that deliverance was to be expected from God.

But we must observe, that a pronoun feminine is here used, when he says, *even thou*, or, thou also. Both the Latins and Greeks have been deceived by the ambiguity of the language used,[1] and have thought that the words are addressed to Christ, as though he was to draw his captives from a deep pit; but God here addresses his Church, as though he had said, "Hear thou." And the particle גַּם, *gam*, is emphatical, meaning this—"I see that I do not prevail much with you, for ye are in a manner overwhelmed by your calamities, and no hope refreshes you, as you think yourselves visited, as it were, with a thousand deaths; but still, though a mass of evils disheartens you, or at least so far oppresses you as to render inefficacious what I say—though, in short, ye be of all men the most miserable, I will yet redeem your captives." But God addresses the whole Church, as in many other places, under the character of a wife.

He says, *By the blood of thy covenant.* This seems not to belong properly to the Church, for there is no other author of the covenant but God himself; but the relation, we know, between God and his people, as to the covenant, is mutual. It is God's covenant, because it flows from him; it is the covenant of the Church, because it is made for its sake, and laid up as it were in its bosom. And the truth penetrated more fully into the hearts of the godly, when they heard that it was not only a divine covenant, but that it was also

[1] Rather by following the *Septuagint*, who changed the person of the verb "ἐξαπέστειλας, thou hast sent forth." The pronoun "σύ, thou," in Greek, has no gender, as in Hebrew. It was in this way that *Theodoret*, *Cyril*, and *Augustine* were led astray as to the sense of this passage. The *Targum* retains the reading of the Hebrew.—*Ed.*

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the covenant of the people themselves: *Then by the blood of thy covenant,* &c. Some refer this, but very unwisely, to circumcision, for the Prophet no doubt had regard to the sacrifices. It was then the same as though he had said—"Why do ye offer victims daily in the temple? If ye think that you thus worship God, it is a very gross and insane superstition. Call then to mind the end designed, or the model given you from above; for God has already promised that he will be propitious to you, by expiating your sins by the only true sacrifice: And for this end offer your sacrifices, and that blood will bring expiation with it. Now since God has not in vain appointed your sacrifices, and ye observe them not in vain, no doubt the benefit will come at length to light, for *I have sent forth thy captives.* For God does not reconcile himself to men, that he may destroy or reduce them to nothing, or that he may suffer them to pine away and die; for why does God pardon men, but that he may deliver them from destruction?"[1]

We now perceive why the Prophet thus speaks of the blood of the covenant in connection with the salvation of the whole people. "Ye daily offer victims," he says, "and the blood is poured on the altar: God has not appointed this in vain." Now since God receives you into favour, that ye may be safe, he will therefore deliver the captives of his Church; *I will send forth,* he says, or, have sent forth *thy captives:* for he expresses here in the past tense what he would do in future.

I will send forth thy captives from the pit in which there is

[1] "The words," says *Newcome,* "allude to the Jewish custom of ratifying covenants by the blood of victims." It was called "thy" covenant, because it was a covenant *made* with the daughter of Sion. The meaning is, "the covenant ratified with thee by blood," that is, of victims. See Ex. xxiv. 6-8. The ב here means *for,* or *on account of.* The verse may be thus rendered—

As to thee also, on account of the blood of thy covenant
Have I sent forth thy prisoners
From a pit without water in it.

It was thought by *Drusius* and *Newcome* that the deliverance of the people from Babylon is here referred to, which is the most probable opinion, as the next verse seems to have been addressed to them. But *Marckius* and *Henderson* agree with *Calvin,* that the past tense is used for the future.—*Ed.*

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no water. He means a deep gulf, where thirst itself would destroy miserable men without being drawn forth by a power from above. In short, he means, first, that the Jews were sunk in the deep; and secondly, that thirst would consume them, so that death was nigh at hand, except they were miraculously delivered by God: but he reminds them, that no impediment would prevent God from raising them to light from the deepest darkness. We then see that this was added, that the Jews might learn to struggle against all things that might strengthen unbelief, and feel assured that they would be preserved safe, for it is God's peculiar work to raise the dead. This is the meaning. He now adds—

12. Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare *that* I will render double unto thee.

12. Convertimini ad munitionem vincti spei; etiam hodie annuntio duplicia, rependam tibi (*vel*, duplicia rependam tibi; *uterque sensus non male convenit.*)

Zechariah proceeds with the same subject. He bids the Jews suddenly to betake themselves to their fortress. There is no doubt but that he means by that term the holy land; nor do I oppose the opinion of those who think the temple to be intended: for Jerusalem and the whole of Judea is called a fortress, and for this reason, because God had chosen his sanctuary there. It is then the same, as though one wishing to collect a dispersed and straggling band of soldiers were to say, "To the standard, to the standard;" or, "To the troop, to the troop." For though Judea was not then fortified, nay, Jerusalem itself had no high wall or strong towers, yet they had God as their stronghold, and this was impregnable; for he had promised that the Jews would be safe under the shadow of his wings, though exposed to the caprices of all around them. Nor does he here address them only who had returned, or the exiles who still remained scattered in the East; but by this declaration he encourages the whole Church, that they might be fully persuaded that when assembled under the protection of God, they were as fortified as though they were on every side surrounded by the strongest citadels, and that there would be no access open to enemies.

Return ye then *to the stronghold.* This could not have

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appeared unreasonable; for we know that when they were building the city their work was often interrupted; and we know also that the temple was not then fortified by a wall. But Zechariah teaches them, that in that state of things there was sufficient defence in God alone. Though then the Jews were not made safe by moats, or by walls, or by mounds, he yet reminds them, that God would be sufficient to defend them, and that he would be to them, as it is said in another place, a wall and a rampart. (Is. xxvi. 1.)

But it is not without reason that he calls them *the captives of hope;* for many had wholly alienated themselves from God and altogether fallen away, so as to be unworthy of any promise. By this mark then he distinguishes between the faithful captives and those who had wholly degenerated and separated themselves from the family of God, so as no more to be counted among his people. And this ought to be carefully noticed, which interpreters have coldly passed by. They have indeed said, that they are called captives of hope, because they hoped to be saved; but they have not observed the distinction, by which Zechariah intended to convey reproof to the unbelieving Jews. It was therefore not without meaning that he directed his word to the faithful only, who were not only captives, but also captives having hope. I cannot finish to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we do not at this day look for a Redeemer to deliver us from temporal miseries, but only carry on a warfare under the banner of the cross, until he appear to us from heaven to gather us into his blessed kingdom,—O grant, that we may patiently bear all evils and all troubles: and as Christ once for all poured forth the blood of the new and eternal covenant, and gave us a symbol of it in the Holy Supper, may we, confiding in so sacred a seal, never doubt but that he will be always propitious to us, and render manifest to us the fruit of his reconciliation, when after having supported us for a season under the burden of those miseries by which we are now oppressed, thou gatherest us into that blessed and perfect glory, which has been procured for us by the blood of Christ our Lord, and which is daily set before us in the gospel, and laid up for us in heaven, until we at length shall come to enjoy it through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-fourth.

In yesterday's lecture the Prophet exhorted the Jews to assemble into that stronghold of which God was to be the guardian. And we have said that Jerusalem was then to the godly an impregnable fortress, though for the most part without walls, because the place was as it were sacred to God, and so under his care and protection. He now adds a confirmation of this truth, that they would be doubly more blessed who had resorted to Jerusalem than their fathers before their exile: for a comparison is no doubt made between them and their fathers. From the reign of David until the exile, God had proved by many tokens that he had a care for that people; he afterwards raised up, as it were, a new Church, that is, when a liberty to return was granted to the Jews. The meaning then here is, that if the fathers before they were driven from their country had experienced God kind and bountiful, those who had now returned to their country would find God much more bountiful towards his new Church.

We now then understand what he means by *double*, even double happiness; for God would increase his blessings to the Jews, though their condition was then by no means desirable; nay, very hard according to the estimation of the world. But he says, that he *declared from that day*, intimating, that though the effect of this prophecy was not immediately apparent, yet he spoke with confidence; for they would in course of time find that nothing had been said to them in vain or rashly. The Prophet then shows here, that he spoke with perfect confidence, and this in order to gain credit to the promise, lest the Jews should doubt that what they heard from the mouth of Zechariah should at length be made evident to them.[1] Let us now proceed—

[1] The words may with more propriety be regarded as spoken by God. The construction of the last clause has been differently given. *M'Caul* in his observations on *Kimchi* has rendered it thus—"The announcer of double will I cause to return to thee." The "announcer of double" in his view is the Messiah: but to cause the Messiah to "return," is a language that cannot be admitted; and his remark on נגד in Hiphil is not correct: that is, that it has ever an accusative or a dative, or both, after

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13. When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Sion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

13. Quia tetendi mihi Iehudah arcum, implevi Ephraim, et excitavi filios tuos, Sion, contra filios tuos, Græcia; et posui te quasi gladium gigantis (*vel*, robusti.)

God declares here that the Jews would be the conquerors of all nations, though they were then despised. That people, we know, were hated by all; and they were at the same time weak, and had hardly any strength, so as to be able to resist the wrongs done them on every side. As then this trial might have terrified weak minds, the Prophet says that the Jews would be as it were the *bow* and *the quiver* of God, so that they would be able to pierce all nations with their arrow; and that they would also be like a *sword*, which would wound and lay prostrate the strongest.

We now perceive the meaning of the words, and see also the reason why the Prophet made this addition, even because the Jews were filled with terror on seeing themselves surrounded on every side by violent and strong enemies, to whom they were very unequal in strength. Now, these similitudes we know occur elsewhere in Scripture, and their meaning seems to be this—that the Jews would be the conquerors of all nations, not by their own prowess, as they say, but because the Lord would guide and direct them by his own hand. For what is a bow except it be bent? and the bow itself is useless, except the arrow be discharged. The Prophet then teaches us, that though the Jews could do nothing of themselves, yet there was strength enough in God's hand alone.

I have bent for me, he says, *Judah as a bow.* The Lord reminds the Jews of his own power, that they might not regard their own strength, but acknowledge that they were made strong from above, and that strength to overcome their

it. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 18; 2 Sam. xix. 6. It is better to connect "double," or a double blessing, with the verb "restore,"—

Even this day I declare,
A double *blessing* will I restore to thee.

This is essentially the rendering of *Drusius*, *Grotius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. There is a correspondence between the verb "restore," or cause to return, and the verb "return" at the beginning of the verse. "Return, &c., and I will cause to return to thee a double blessing."—*Ed.*

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enemies would be given them. Hence he compares Ephraim to a quiver. But we have seen yesterday, that Judah and Ephraim are to be taken as the same; for as it had been a divided body, God intimates here, that when the Jews became again united and joined together, and when the ten tribes showed brotherly kindness towards the kingdom of Judah, then the people would be to him like a bow well furnished, being fully supplied with arrows.[1]

He afterwards adds, *I will rouse thy sons, O Sion, against thy sons, O Javan.* This apostrophe is more emphatical than if the third person had been adopted; for by addressing first Sion, and then Greece, he shows that he possesses power over all nations, so that he raises up the one and casts down the other, as he pleases.

As to the word יָוָן, *Ivan*, we have elsewhere seen that it is to be taken for Greece, and now for all the countries beyond sea. Yet many think that the word Jonah is derived from this Hebrew word, and, as it often happens, is corruptly pronounced. But we may gather from many instances that יָוָן, *Ivan*, is put for Greece, or for distant countries, and specifically for Macedonia. It is then the same as though he had said—That the Jews would be superior to all heathen nations, even were they to unite together and bring vast forces from distant lands. For the Greeks could not have waged war in Judea with a small force; they must have brought with them large armies, to fight in a strange country and unknown to them. Nor could the Jews have attacked

[1] *Kimchi* says that a remnant of the ten tribes were among the Jews who returned from Babylon, being those who had been left in the land by Shalmanezer, as it appears from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 9, 33; xxxv. 17. "These went," he says, "into captivity with the tribe of Judah and of Benjamin to Babylon, and returned with them when they returned." *Abarbanel* gives the same opinion, and also *Cyril* and *Bochart*. The latter infers their return from Ezra vi. 17; viii. 35.

This prophecy is viewed by *Henderson* as having been fulfilled in the wars of the Maccabees. See 1 Macc. i. 62; ii. 41-43; iii. 33. This was also the view of *Theodoret, Jerome, Grotius*, and *Marckius*. *Newcome* thought that "the language of this prophecy is too strong for these events, and may remain to be fulfilled against the present possessors of the countries called Javan, which were Greece, Macedonia, and part of Asia Minor." With this view *Adam Clarke* concurs, though *Scott* demurs. But there seems to be nothing here, and especially in the following verses, that does not well comport with the wars of the Maccabees.—*Ed.*

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the Grecians or other remote nations, except they were favoured with aid from heaven. For this reason also he adds, that they would be *like a sword*, by which a strong man can destroy others of less power. Let us now go on—

14. And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

14. Et Iehova super eos conspicuus erit, et egredietur quasi fulgur sagitta ejus; et Dominus Iehova tuba clanget, et procedet in turbinibus Theman. (*vel*, Austri.)

He goes on with the same subject, but explains what I have said—that victory is promised to the Jews, not that which they could gain by their own power, but that which should happen to them beyond their expectation; for this is what is meant when he says, that God would be *seen over them*. For though the events of all wars depend on God, yet he is said to be seen where there is a remarkable victory, which cannot be accounted for by men. When unequal armies engage, it is no wonder when one becomes victorious; and it may sometimes be that a less number overcomes a greater, even because it exceeded the other in courage, in counsel, in skill, or in some other way, or because the larger army fought from a disadvantageous position, or trusting in its own strength rushed on inconsiderately. But when consternation alone dejects one party and renders the other victorious, in this case the power of God becomes evident. And even heathens have thought that men are confounded from above when courage fails them; and this is most true. We now then understand why the Prophet says, that God would be *seen over* the Jews, even because they would conquer their enemies, not by usual means, not after an earthly manner, but in a wonderful way, so that it would appear evident to be the work of God.

He then adds, *Go forth shall his arrow as lightning*. He again repeats and confirms what we have already observed —that there would be no movement among the Jews, no celerity, but what would be like the sword, which lies quiet on the ground, except it be taken up by the hand of man, and what also would be like the arrow, which can do no

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harm except it be thrown by some one. We then see that the victory mentioned before is ascribed to God alone. And for the same reason he adds what follows, that *Jehovah* would *come with the shout of a trumpet,* and also, with *the whirlwind of the south.* In a word, he means that the work of God would be evident when the Jews went forth against the enemies by whom they had been oppressed and would still be oppressed. That they might not then compare their own with their enemies' strength, the Prophet here brings God before them, by whose authority, guidance, and power this war was to be carried on. And then, that he might extol God's power, he says, that he would come with the *shout of a trumpet,* and with *the whirlwind of the south.*

Interpreters take the whirlwinds of the south simply for violent storms; for we know that the most impetuous whirlwinds arise from the south. But as the Prophet joins the whirlwinds of the south to the shout of a trumpet, he seems to me to allude to those miracles by which God showed to the Jews in a terrific manner his power on Mount Sinai, for the desert of Teman and Mount Paran were in that vicinity. We have seen a similar passage in the third chapter of Habakkuk, "God," he said, "shall come from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran." The Prophet's object was to encourage the Jews to entertain hope; for God, who had long concealed himself and refrained from helping them, would at length come forth to their aid. How? He reminded them in that passage of the records of ancient history, for God had made known his power on Mount Sinai, in the desert of Teman, and it was the south region with regard to Judea; and we also know that trumpets sounded in the air, and that all this was done that the Jews might reverently receive the law, and also that they might feel certain that they would be always safe under God's hand, since he thus shook the elements by his nod, and filled the air with lightnings and storms and whirlwinds, and also made the air to ring with the shouts of trumpets. It is for the same reason that the Prophet speaks in this passage, when he says, that God would make himself known as formerly, when he astonished the people by the shouts of

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trumpets, and also when he appeared in whirlwinds on Mount Sinai.[1] He then adds—

15. The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling-stones; and they shall drink, *and* make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, *and* as the corners of the altar.

15. Iehova exercituum proteget eos; et comedent et subjicient lapidibus fundæ, (*vel*, lapides, ut alii vertunt,) et bibent, et tumultuabuntur tanquam à vino, et replebuntur quasi phiala, quasi anguli altaris.

He expresses again the same thing in other words—that God would be like a shadow to his people, so that he would with an extended hand protect them from their enemies. Since the Jews might have justly felt a distrust in their own strength, the Prophet continually teaches them that their safety depended not on earthly aids, but that God alone was sufficient, for he could easily render them safe and secure. He also adds, that there would be to them plenty of bread and wine to satisfy them. He seems here indeed to promise too great an abundance, as by its abuse luxury came, for he says, that they would be satiated and be like the drunken; *they shall drink*, he says, *and shall make a noise as through wine*. Certainly those who drink wine moderately, do not

[1] The two preceding verses, the 13th and 14th, are capable of being rendered more correctly. *Junius* and *Tremelius* render וְ, at the beginning of verse 13th, *when*, and connect it with the preceding verse. But if the particle be so rendered, and ו, at the beginning of verse 14th, be rendered *then*, the meaning will be more evident. All the verbs in verse 13 are in the past tense, and may be rendered as future perfects according to what is done by the preceding authors. Then the two verses will be as follows—

13. When I shall have bent Judah for myself,
And the bow filled with Ephraim,
And roused up thy sons, O Sion,
Against thy sons, O Javan,
And made thee as the sword of a mighty man;
14. Then Jehovah shall be seen (a leader) over them,
And go forth like lightning shall his arrow;
Yea, the Lord Jehovah with a trumpet shall blow,
And march in (or, accompanied with) the whirlwinds of the south.

The "whirlwinds," or storms, as rendered by *Henderson*, "of the south," were impetuous and violent. See Job xxxvii. 9; Is. xxi. 1. The images here, as *Newcome* justly observes, are very sublime. The change of the person, as in verse 14th, is very common in the Prophets and in other parts of Scripture. See Gen. iii. 22, 23.—*Ed.*

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make noise, but they are as composed and quiet after dinner as those who fast. Zechariah then seems here to make an unreasonable promise, even that of excess in meat and drink. But we have elsewhere seen that wherever the Holy Spirit promises abundance of good things he does not give loose reins to men's lusts, but his object is only to show that God will be so bountiful to his children that they shall stand in need of nothing, that they shall labour under no want. Nay, the affluence of blessings is to try our frugality, for when God pours forth as it were with a liberal hand more than what is needful, he thus tries the temperance of each of us; for when in the enjoyment of great abundance, we of our own accord restrain ourselves, we then really show that we are grateful to God.[1]

It is indeed true, that cheerfulness for abundance of blessings is allowed us, for it is often said in the law, "Thou shalt rejoice before thy God," (Deut. xii. 18;) but we must bear in mind, that frugal use of blessings is required, in order that the gifts of God may not be converted to a sinful purpose.

[1] Another view is taken of this verse. The destruction of enemies, and not abundance of blessings, is what is said to be set forth in this verse, according to the rendering both of the *Septuagint* and the *Targum*, followed by *Jerome*, *Kimchi*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, *Newcome*, *Blayney*, and *Henderson*. "The bowl or basin," says *Blayney*, "and the corners of the altar, all seem to bespeak *blood;* for the blood of the sacrificed beasts was part of it received in bowls for the purpose of sprinkling, and the rest poured out at the foot of the altar, Lev. iv. 5-7." *Henry* states this view as his own, and also mentions that given by *Calvin*, which both *Scott* and *Adam Clarke* have taken.

The latter part of the verse is rendered by the *Septuagint* as though the meaning were, that the Jews would offer abundant sacrifices to express their gratitude. "And they shall fill the bowls as well as the altar." *Junius*, and *Tremelius*, and *Piscator*, have rendered the Hebrew according to this meaning, taking the two *caphs* as signifying *both* and *and*, or *as well as*, "And they shall fill both the bowl and the corners of the altar," that is, by offering sacrifices in token of their gratitude for victory. But the explanation of *Grotius* is, "They shall be filled with the blood of their enemies as the corners of the altar are with the blood of victims. Lev. iv. 25; xvi. 18."

It is difficult to know which view to take. The authorities, and perhaps the context, are in favour of the revenge that would be taken on the Grecians. In this case the metaphors, as *Newcome* observes, are taken from beasts of prey, not an uncommon thing in Scripture. See Num. xxiii. 24.—*Ed.*

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Then the Prophet does not here excite or stimulate the Jews to intemperance, that they might fill themselves with too much food, or inebriate themselves with too much wine; but he only promises that there would be no want of either food or drink when God blessed them as in former days. And this seems also to be specified at the end of the verse, when he mentions the *horns of the altar*. He had previously said, that they would be full as the bowls were; but when he adds, "the horns of the altar," he no doubt reminds them of temperance, that they were to feast as though they were in God's presence. They were indeed accustomed to pour out the wine and the oil on the horns of the altar; but, at the same time, since they professed that they offered from their abundance of wine and oil some first-fruits to God, it behoved them to remember that their wine was sacred, that their oil was sacred, as both proceeded from God. The Prophet then declares, that the Jews would be thus enriched and replenished with all good things, and that they were yet to remember, that they were to live as in God's presence, lest they should by luxury pollute what he had consecrated to a legitimate end. He then adds—

16. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for *they shall be as* the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.

16. Et servabit eos Iehova, Deus ipsorum, in die illa quasi gregem populum suum; quia lapides coronæ elevati super terram ejus.

He continues the same subject, but uses various figures, that he might more fully confirm what then was incredible. He indeed reminds them that God would not save his people in an ordinary way, such as is common to men. He compares them to sheep, that they might know, as I have said already, that their salvation would come from heaven, as they were themselves weak, and had no strength and no power; for to show this was the object of this comparison. He declares then that the Jews would be saved, because God would supply them with every thing necessary to conquer their enemies; but that he would in a wonderful manner help their weakness, even like a shepherd when he rescues

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his sheep from the jaws of a wolf. For the sheep, which escapes death by the coming of the shepherd, have no reason to boast of victory, but all the praise is due to the shepherd. So also God says, that it will be his work to deliver the Jews from their enemies.

By saying, *his own people*, he seems to confine to his elect what appeared too general; for he had said *save them will God*. It is however certain that the people who were then small, had been cut off, so that the greater part had perished; but at the same time it was true that God was a faithful guardian of his people, for there were then many Israelites, naturally descended from their common father Abraham, who were only in name Israelites.

He then adds another similitude,—that they would be elevated high, like precious stones in a crown, which are borne on the head of a king, as though he had said, that they would be a royal priesthood according to what is said in the law. He had said before, *They shall subdue the stones*, or, with the stones, *of a sling*. More correct seems to be the opinion of those who read *with the stones of a sling*,[1] that is, that the Jews would conquer their enemies, not with swords, nor with arrows, but only with stones, in the same manner as Goliath was slain by David. Though not given to warlike arts, nor exercised in the use of arms, they would yet,

[1] This rendering is supported by the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, the *Vulgate*, and adopted by *Grotius*, *Marckius*, and *Newcome*. But to "subdue" or tread down, "the sling-stones" is the version of *Kimchi*, *Piscator*, *Dathius*, and *Henderson*; who have thought that the Greeks are here called "sling-stones," by way of contempt, as the Jews are called "crown-stones" in verse 16, by way of honour; the first were common and worthless; the second rare and precious. What seems unfavourable to this metaphor is the expression, "lifted up as ensign," as applied to "the stones of a crown." The words, אַבְנֵי נֵזֶר, have been rendered, "stones of separation," that is, stones separated, set apart and consecrated to a particular use. See Gen. xxviii. 18; Jos. iv. 5, 20. Hence *Blayney's* version is, "consecrated stones," in accordance with the *Septuagint*, "λίθοι ἁγίου—sacred or holy stones," and also with the *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions. They were stones, as it seems, set up as memorials of victory. Suitable then is the expression, that they were raised, erected or lifted up as banners or ensigns over the land. "Crowned trophies" is the rendering of *Newcome*,—stones encircled by a crown as monuments of victory. But whether we render the words, consecrated or crowned stones, the same thing is meant: and the propriety of the participle which follows becomes evident.—*Ed.*

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as the Prophet shows, be conquerors; for their slings would be sufficient for the purpose of slaying their enemies. But some think that heathens and the unbelieving are compared to the stones of the sling, because they are worthless and of no account; which at the first sight seems ingenious, but it is a strained view. It is not at the same time improper to consider that there is here an implied contrast between the stones of the sling, and the stones of a crown; the Jews would cast stones from their slings to destroy their enemies, and they themselves would be precious stones. The Prophet seems here to represent the holy land as the chief part of the whole world. *Elevated*, he says, shall be *the stones of crown over the land* of God. Had he said over Egypt or over Assyria, the connexion of the clauses would not have been so appropriate; but he names Judea, as the head of the world, and that the Jews, when prosperous and happy in it, would be like the stones of a crown, all the parts set in due order. In short, he shows, that the favour of God alone and his blessing, would be sufficient to render the Jews happy, as they would then excel in honour, enjoy the abundance of all good things, and possess invisible courage to resist all their adversaries.

Let us now enquire when all these things were fulfilled. We have said that Zechariah, by promising fulness to the Jews, gave them no unbridled license to indulge themselves in eating and drinking, but only expressed and extolled, in hyperbolical terms, the immense kindness and bounty of God to them. This is one thing.

But at the same time we must by the way consider another question: He says, that they would be like *arrows and swords*. Now as they were too much inclined to shed blood, he seems here to excite them in a manner to take vengeance fully on their enemies, which was by no means reasonable. The answer to this is plain,—that the Jews were not to forget what God prescribed in his law: for as when God promised large abundance of wine, and a plentiful provision, he did not recall what he had already commanded—that they were to practise temperance in eating and drinking; so now when he promises victory over their

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enemies, he is not inconsistent with himself, nor does he condemn what he had once approved, nor abrogate the precept by which he commanded them, not to exercise cruelty towards their enemies, but to restrain themselves, and to show mercy and kindness. We hence see that we are not to judge from these words what is right for us to do, or how far we may go in taking revenge on enemies; nor to determine what liberty we have in eating and drinking. Such things are not to be learnt from this passage, or from similar passages; for the Prophet here does only set forth the power of God and his bounty towards his people.

Now again it may be asked, when has God fulfilled this, when has he made the Jews far and wide victorious and the destroyers of their enemies? All Christian expositors give us an allegorical explanation,—that God sent forth his armies when he sent forth Apostles into all parts of the world, who pierced the hearts of men,—and that he slew with his sword the wicked whom he destroyed. All this is true; but a simpler meaning must in the first place be drawn from the words of the Prophet, and that is,—that God will render his Church victorious against the whole world. And most true is this; for though the faithful are not furnished with swords or with any military weapons, yet we see that they are kept safe in a wonderful manner under the shadow of God's hand. When adversaries exercise cruelty towards them, we see how God returns their wicked devices on their own heads. In this way is really fulfilled what we read here,—even that the children of God are like arrows and swords, and that they are also preserved as a flock; for they are too weak to stand their ground, were not the Lord to put forth his power, when he sees them violently assailed by the wicked. There is then no need to turn the Prophet's words to an allegorical meaning, when this fact is evident—that God's Church has been kept safe, because God has ever blunted all the weapons of enemies; yea, he has often by a strong hand discharged his arrows and vibrated his sword. For when Alexander the Great had passed over the sea, when he had marched through the whole circuit of the Mediterranean sea, when he had filled all the country with

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blood, he came at length to Judea; how was it that he left it without committing any slaughter, without exercising any cruelty, except that God restrained him? It will not weary you, if I relate what we read in Josephus; and it is true I have no doubt. He says, that when Alexander came, he was full of wrath, and breathing threats against those Jews by whom he had not been assisted, and who seemed to have despised his authority: after having thus given vent to his rage, he at length came into the presence of Jadeus the high-priest, and seeing him adorned with a mitre, he fell down and humbly asked pardon; and while all were amazed his answer was—that God had appeared to him in that form while he was yet in Greece, and encouraged him to undertake that expedition. When therefore he saw the image or figure of the God of heaven in that sacerdotal dress, he was constrained to give glory to God. Thus far Josephus, whose testimony in this instance has never been suspected.

There is then no reason for any one to weary himself in finding out the meaning of the Prophet, since this fact is clear enough—that God's elect have been victorious, because God has ever sent forth his arrows and vibrated his sword. At the same time there is another view of this victory; for alien and remote people were subdued by the sword of the Spirit, even by the truth of the gospel: but this is a sense deduced from the other; for when we apprehend the literal meaning of the Prophet, an easy passage is then open to us, by which we may come to the kingdom of Christ. These remarks refer to the abundance of provisions, as well as to the victory over enemies. It now follows—

17. For how great *is* his goodness, and how great *is* his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

17. Nam quanta beneficentia ejus? et quanta pulchritudo ejus? frumentum adolescentes, et mustum recreat (*vel*, corroborat) puellas.

The Prophet here exclaims at the incredible kindness of God, that the Jews might learn to raise up their thoughts above the world, as they were to look for that felicity which he had before mentioned. We then see that by this exclamation a fuller confirmation is given to what had been said

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by the Prophet, as though his words were,—"No one ought to judge of God's favour, of which I have spoken, according to his own doings, or conduct, or experience; but on the contrary, every one of you ought to be filled with amazement at God's incredible kindness, and at his incredible beauty." But by the last word he understands the brightness or splendour, which appears in all God's favours and gifts.[1]

He then concludes by saying, that the abundance of corn and wine would be so great, that young men and young women would eat and drink together, and be fully satisfied. Here a frivolous question may be asked, whether Zechariah allowed the use of wine to young women. But he speaks not here, as I have said before, of God's blessing, as though it were an incentive to luxury; but what he means is, that the abundance of provisions would be so great as to be fully sufficient, not only for the old, but also for young men and young women. We know that when there is but a small supply of wine, it ought by right of age to be reserved for the old, but when wine so overflows that young men and young women may freely drink of it, it is a proof of great abundance. This then is simply the meaning of the Pro-

[1] Goodness and beauty are said to be God's, because conferred by him. Some refer "his" to the people and others to the land. The meaning is the same, though the form of the expression would be different. As the future time is referred to, the question here may be better expressed in the future tense,—

For what *will be* his goodness!
And what *will be* his beauty!
The corn shall cause the young men to thrive,
And new wine the maids.

But were the ו after "land" in the preceding verse to be referred to "people" in the same verse, the ו added here to "goodness" might be applied to the same antecedent: and this would be the most natural rendering,—

16. And save them will Jehovah their God,
In that day, *even* as sheep, his people:
Therefore consecrated stones
Shall be raised as banners over their land.
For how great *will be* their good (or prosperity!)
And how great their comeliness!
Corn shall cause the young men to thrive,
And new wine the maids.

We use "they," and "their," when we speak of "people," though in Hebrew the singular pronoun is used.—*Ed.*

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phet: but something more shall be said to-morrow on the subject.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cannot look for temporal or eternal happiness, except through Christ alone, and as thou settest him forth to us as the only true fountain of all blessings, —O grant, that we, being content with the favour offered to us through him, may learn to renounce the whole world, and so strive against all unbelief, that we may not doubt but that thou wilt ever be our kind and gracious Father, and fully supply whatever is necessary for our support: and may we at the same time live soberly and temperately, so that we may not be under the power of earthly things; but with our hearts raised above, aspire after that heavenly bliss to which thou invitest us, and to which thou also guidest us by such helps as are earthly, so that being really united to our head, we may at length reach that glory which has been procured for us by his blood.—Amen.

CHAPTER X.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-fifth.

1. Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; *so* the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

1. Petite à Iehova pluviam tempore serotino (*vertunt;*) Iehova faciet nubes, et pluvium imbrem dabit illis, cuique herbam in agro.

ZECHARIAH, after having shown that God would be bountiful towards the Jews, so that nothing necessary to render life happy and blessed should be wanting, now reproves them for their unbelief, because they did not expect from the Lord what he was ready fully to bestow on them. As then it depended on them only, that they did not enjoy abundance of all blessings, he charges them with ingratitude: for though he exhorts them to prayer, there is yet an implied reproof. One by merely reading over the words may think that a new subject is here introduced, that the Jews are directed to ask of the Lord what he had previously promised them; but he who will more minutely consider the whole

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context, will easily find that what I have stated is true—that the Jews are here condemned, and on this account, because they closed the door against God's favour; for they were straitened in themselves, as all the unbelieving are, who cannot embrace the promises of God; nor is it at all doubtful but that many made great complaints, when they found themselves disappointed of their wishes. They had indeed hoped for a most abundant supply of corn and wine, and had also promised to themselves all kinds of blessings, yet the Lord, as we have seen in the book of Haggai, had begun to withdraw his hand, so that they laboured under want of provisions; and when mine and thirst oppressed them, they thought that they had been in a manner deceived by God. On this ground the Prophet expostulates with them; they thrust from themselves, by their want of faith, the favour which had been prepared for them. We now then understand the Prophet's meaning.

He bids them to *ask rain of Jehovah.* They ought indeed to have done this of themselves without being reminded; for though Christ has delivered to his Church a form of prayer, it ought yet to be as it were the dictate of nature to seek of God our daily bread; and it is not without reason that he claims to himself the name of a Father. The Prophet then does here reprove the Jews for their brutal stupidity—that they did not ask rain of the Lord. He adds, *at the late season,* that is, at spring time; for rains at two seasons were necessary for the corn, after sowing and before harvest, and whenever Scripture speaks of fruitfulness or of a large produce, it mentions rain at these two seasons. Zechariah in this place only refers to the vernal before harvest; for in that hot country the earth wanted new moisture, *Ask,* he says, *rain* at the beginning of summer.

Jehovah, he adds, *will give* it; *he will make clouds,* or storms, or boisterous winds, as some read; but it is evident from other passages that חֲזִיזִים, *chezizim,* means clouds, which are as it were preparations for rain.[1] He then says,

[1] The word in the singular number is found twice, in Job xxviii. 26; xxxviii. 25, and rendered "lightning." *Scott,* the versifier of the book of Job, renders it "blaze" or "flash of lightning," deriving it from an Arabic

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that *a shower would come with the rain;* for some take גֶּשֶׁם, *gesham*, for a shower, that is, heavy rain; but the Prophet introduces here the two words, as though he had said, that the rains would be continued until the ground was saturated and the dryness removed. Some translate, "the rain of a shower," but this would be too strained. I prefer then this rendering, *He will give rain, a shower*, that is, abundant rain; *to every one grass in the field*, that is, so that there may be moisture enough for the ground. In short, he promises a plentiful irrigation, that drought might not deprive them of the hope of food and support. What I have stated will appear more clear from the following verse, for he adds—

2. For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain; therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because *there was* no shepherd.

2. Certè simulacra loquuta sunt vanitatem; et divini viderunt mendaciùm, et somnia vanitatis loquuti sunt, frustra consolati sunt; ideo transierunt (*vel*, migrarunt) sicut oves (*aut*, grex,) humiliati sunt, quia nullus fuit pastor.

Here the Prophet, as I have said, confirms the truth, that the blame justly belonged to the Jews that God did not deal more liberally with them; for he shows that they had fallen into superstitions, and had thus turned away the favour of God, which was already certain and nigh to them. Zechariah does not here condemn foreign nations given to superstitions; but, on the contrary, he reproves the Jews themselves for leaving the true God, and for betaking themselves to idols, to soothsayers, and diviners, and for having thus preferred to feed on their own delusions, rather than to open the door to the favour of God, who had freely promised that he would suffer them to want nothing. As then God had

word which means to cut a thing like the jagged edge of a leaf. It is then the zigzag flash of lightning. *Marckius* renders it here "coruscations;" *Dathius* and *Henderson* "lightnings." To avoid the connection of two words of similar import, the arrangement of the verse may be different,—

Ask ye from Jehovah rain in the latter season;
Jehovah, who makes the flashes and the rain,
Will a shower give to you,
To every one grass in the field.

"To you," לָכֶם; so read many MSS., about fifteen, and the Syriac.—*Ed.*

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kindly invited the Jews to himself, as he had showed himself ready to do them good, was it not the basest ingratitude in them to turn away to idols and to attend to magical delusions? for they might have safely acquiesced in God's word. They would not have been deprived of their hope, had they been firmly persuaded that God had spoken the truth to them. As then they had done so grievous a wrong to God, as to run after idols, and after the crafts and impostures of Satan, the Prophet here deservedly condemns them for this wickedness.

Images,[1] he says, *have spoken vanity, and diviners have seen falsehood, and have told dreams of vanity.* He means, in short, that whatever means unbelieving men may try, they can attain nothing, and they will at length find that they have been miserably deceived by Satan. They have recourse to various expedients, for unbelief is full of bustle and fervour: "O! this will not succeed, I will try something else." Thus the unbelieving wander, and resort to many and various expedients. But the Prophet teaches this general truth—that when men turn away from God, they have recourse to vain things; for there is no truth without God.

He afterwards adds, that on account of idols, as well as of diviners and magicians, *consolation was given in vain;* and this he confirms by the event, and says, that they had *wandered as sheep*, that they had been *distressed, because there was no shepherd.* The Prophet no doubt refers here to the

[1] Literally, "the teraphims." See Hos. iii. 4, vol. i. p. 130. They were household gods, called *Penates* by the heathens. "Images" is the rendering of the *Targum* of *Onkelos*, and "worshippers of images" of *Jonathan* in this place. *Jerome* has "simulacra—images." *Parkhurst* derives the word from רפה, an appaller, they being the objects of dread or fear. *Gesenius*, from an Arabic word, which means to "live in comfort," they being viewed as the givers of happiness. *Lee*, from an Ethiopic word, signifying a "remnant, a survivor," and thinks that they mean "relics." Whatever may be the meaning of the word, they were no doubt a sort of household gods, made, as *Aben Ezra* says, in a human form, and consulted, says *Kimchi*, as to future events.

There are three kinds of idolatrous and superstitious practices mentioned here—the images which were consulted as oracles, the pretenders to visions, and the dreamers of dreams; but all that was spoken, and seen, and dreamt, was vain, and false, and useless.—*Ed.*

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time of exile, that the Jews might learn to be wise, at least by the teaching of experience; for they had known to their great loss, that without God there is no real and solid comfort: nor does he without reason upbraid them with the punishment which their fathers had suffered, for he saw that they were walking in their steps. Since then the Jews were imitating the depraved inquisitiveness of their fathers, the Prophet justly charges them, that they did not acknowledge what, by the event itself, was well known to all; for the common proverb is, that experience is the teacher of fools. Since they did not become wise even when smitten, their stupidity was more than proved. We now then perceive what the Prophet means.

But we must first notice, that when he bids them to ask rain of the Lord, he speaks of the kingdom of Christ, as all the Prophets are wont to do; for since the Redeemer, promised to the Jews, was to be the author of all blessings, whenever the Prophets speak of his coming, they also promise abundance of corn, and plentiful provisions, and peace, and everything necessary for the wellbeing of the present life. And Zechariah now follows the same course, when he declares that it was not owing to anything in God that he did not kindly supply the Jews with whatever they might have wished, but that the fault was with themselves; for they had by their unbelief, as it has been said, closed the door against his favour. We must yet ever remember what we stated yesterday—that whatever the Prophets have said concerning a blessed life, ought to be judged of according to the nature of the kingdom of Christ. It is a strained interpretation to say that rain is heavenly doctrine; and I do not say that Zechariah spoke allegorically, but he describes under this common figure the kingdom of Christ—even that God will fill his elect with all good things, so that they shall not thirst, nor labour under any want.

But at the same time we must bear in mind the exhortation of Christ—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God; other things," he says, "shall afterwards be added." (Matt. vi. 33.) He then is strangely wrong who thinks that abundance of food was alone promised to the Jews; for God in-

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tended to lead them by degrees to things higher. The Prophet then no doubt includes here, under one kind, all things necessary for a happy life; for it is not the will of God to fill his faithful people in this world as though they were swine; but his design is to give them, by means of earthly things, a taste of the spiritual life. Hence the happiness of which Zechariah now speaks is really spiritual; for as godliness has the promises of the present as well as of the future life, (1 Tim. iv. 8,) so the purpose of God was to consult the weakness of his ancient people, and to set forth the felicity of the spiritual life by means of earthly blessings.

It ought further to be carefully noticed, that the Jews are here exposed to derision, because they wandered after their own devices, when God was yet not far from them, and ready to aid them. Since God then showed himself inclined to kindness, it was a double wickedness in them that they chose to run after idols, magical arts, and the illusions of Satan, rather than to acquiesce in God's word. And similar is the upbraiding we meet with in Jeremiah, when God complains that he was forsaken, while yet he was the fountain of living water, and that the people dug out for themselves cisterns, dry and full of holes. (Jer. ii. 13.) But as this evil is very common, let us know that we are here warned to plant our foot firm on God's word, where he promises that he will take care of us, provided we be satisfied with his favour: nor let us thoughtlessly run after our own imaginations; for however our own counsels may delight us, and though some success may sometimes appear, yet the end will ever show us that most true is what Zechariah teaches us here—that whatever we may attempt will be useless and injurious too, for God will take vengeance on our ingratitude.

We must now also observe, that since Zechariah adduces an example of God's vengeance, by which the Jews had found that they had foolishly sought vain consolations, we ought to take heed, lest we forget those punishments with which God may have visited us in order to restore us to himself: let us remember what we ourselves have experienced, and what has happened to our fathers, even before we were born. Thus then ought the faithful to apply their

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minds so as to recount the judgments of God, that they may derive profit from his scourges. He afterwards adds—

3. Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.

3. Super pastores iratus est furor meus; super hircos visitabo; quia visitabit Iehova exercituum gregem suum, domum Iehudah; et posuit (*vel*, ponet) eos, quasi equum decoris sui in prælio.

He had said that the Jews had been driven into exile, and had been oppressed by their enemies, because they had no shepherd; not indeed to lessen their fault, for they were wholly inexcusable, since they had wilfully renounced God, who would have been otherwise their perpetual shepherd: but he now turns his discourse to the false teachers, to the false prophets and to the wicked priests. Though then they were all unworthy of pardon, yet God here justly summons the shepherds first before his tribunal, who had been the cause of making others to go astray: as when a blind man leads the blind into a ditch, so ungodly pastors become the cause of ruin to others. We have elsewhere observed similar passages, in which God threatened priests and prophets with special punishment, because they had unfaithfully discharged their office; but yet he did not absolve the common people, for from the least to the greatest they were guilty; and it is also certain that men are punished for their obstinacy and wickedness, whenever God gives loose reins to the devil, and deceives them by ungodly teachers.

We now then see the order observed by the Prophet: At the beginning of the chapter he declares that the Jews were without excuse, because they had turned aside again to their own superstitions, though God had severely punished the sins of their fathers, and that thus they had profited nothing; he also shews that they were acting perversely, if they clamoured against God, that he scantily or badly supported them, for they did not look for any thing from him, nor solicited by prayer what he was prepared willingly to grant them. Having thus reproved generally the wickedness of the whole people, the Prophet now assails the ungodly priests, and says that judgment was nigh both the shepherd and the he-goats.

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He gives the name of pastors to wolves, which is a common thing. And here the Papists betray their folly, laying hold of words only, and claiming to themselves all power, because they are called pastors in the Church, and as though Antichrist was not to reign in the temple of God. Does not Zechariah give an honourable name to these wicked men who destroyed the Church of God? Yea, he brings a most heavy charge against them, that they scattered and trampled under their feet the whole kingdom of God, and yet he calls them pastors, even because they held the office of pastors, though they were very far from being faithful, and in no respect attended to their duties.

He then concedes the name of pastors to those who had been called to rule the people, and to whom this office had been divinely committed; and yet God declares that he would visit them, because they had excited his just displeasure. The same is said of the *he-goats*, by which metaphorical name he means all those who were governors, or were in rank above the common people. Those who injured and cruelly treated the sheep had been called he-goats by other Prophets, and especially by Ezekiel. (Ezek. xxxiv. 17.) So then he adds the he-goats to the pastors, because the poor and the lower orders had been led to ruin through their misconduct. And it hence appears how dear to God is the salvation of men; for he denounces vengeance on pastors, though they had not exercised tyranny except on men worthy of such punishment; for it was the just wages of their sins, that the Lord gave them wolves instead of shepherds. But though the Jews had merited such a judgment, yet God was angry with the pastors on account of his constant solicitude for his Church.

And the reason is also added, *For visit will God his flock, the house of Judah;* as though he had said, that he would not regard what the Jews were, but would regard his own election; for greatly valued by God is his own adoption; and as he had been pleased to choose that people, he could not have allowed them to be destroyed. When therefore he saw that his Church had been so much exposed to destruction through the fault of the pastors, he alleges here

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as a reason for his future vengeance, that he could not endure his favour to be brought to nothing; nor is it to be doubted but that he mentions here the house of Judah, because he had restored and consecrated that people to himself, that he might be served by them. He then takes away from the false pastors every pretence for an excuse, when he brings forward his own election, as though he had said, "Though this people had provoked me a hundred times, and deserved a hundred deaths, yet I intended you to be pastors, because the house of Judah has been made sacred to me."

But the visitation of the flock is different from that of the shepherds; for God visits the reprobate, being armed with vengeance, and he visits his own people by aiding them. Now the visitation of the flock refers to the whole house of Judah: and this was owing, as I have said, to their gratuitous adoption; yet the Lord suffered many to rush headlong into ruin, because he delivered only his own elect. It is indeed a mode of speaking that often occurs in the Prophets—that God would help the children of Abraham, when he means only those who were Israelites indeed, and not the degenerated.

He adds that they would be as *a splendid horse in war*. A contrast is here no doubt implied between splendid horses and asses or oxen; for these shepherds who had tyrannically oppressed God's people, are said to be like violent riders who ride on asses and shamefully abuse them, or like herdsmen, who treat their own oxen unhumanly. God then says that he would ride his people in another manner, even as the horseman, who sits splendidly on his horse when going to battle: for even kings, after having ridden a horse in battle, do afterwards wish it to be well taken care of; and they show much solicitude for their horses, and even go to the stable that they may see, if possible, with their own eyes, that they are properly attended to. God then thus intimates, that he indeed required obedience from his people, and intended to retain his own right, to ride as it were on his own people; but yet that he would not oppress them, and that on the contrary he would make them like a splen-

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did horse. We now then perceive why the Prophet turns his discourse here especially to the false shepherds, not indeed to extenuate the fault of the whole people, for none among them was worthy of pardon. It follows—

4. Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle-bow, out of him every oppressor together.

4. Ab eo angulus, ab eo clavus, ab eo arcus belli, ab eo egredietur omnis exactor pariter.

There is here a confirmation of the last verse, but the metaphors are different; for he says, that the Jews would be fortified by every defence necessary for their security; nor is he inconsistent with himself. In the last chapter he indeed taught us, that though exposed to all kinds of wrongs, they would yet be safe through aid from heaven; but now he promises that there would come from them the *corner-stone, the nail, the bow,* and *the exactor;* and this seems a different doctrine; but it is the same as though he had promised, that though they stood in need of many helps, they would yet be sufficiently furnished, as God would be ready to aid them whenever there was need.

By the corner-stone he means the firmness of the building; from the Jews then shall be the *corner-stone;* that is, there shall ever be among that people those capable of carrying on the public government: then, *from thee the nail;* beams, we know, and other parts of the building, are fastened by nails, and we know also, that the ceiling is thereby made secure. Zechariah then mentions here all the supports which sustain a building from its very foundation. He afterwards adds, *the bow of war,* that is, what is necessary to overcome enemies; and, lastly, *the exactor,* one who has power over bordering nations, and demands tribute or tax from them, as conquerors are wont to do from their subjects.[1]

[1] As to "the corner-stone," פִּנָּה, the view given here is correct. The chiefs of the people are in several places called "the corner-stones of the people." See Jud. xx. 2; 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Is. xix. 13. "The angle or corner," says *Blayney,* "metaphorically denotes the chief personage in the community, on whom its strength and security principally depend."

With regard to the "nail," rendered "peg," by *Henderson,* the correct idea seems not to be given. The word יָתֵד, signifies two things—the hooked stake, fixed in the ground, by which tents were fastened—and the hooked nail or peg affixed to the sides of rooms, and put in the wall when built,

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We now see what the Prophet means—that when God would manifest his care for his people and openly show his favour, the Jews would be fortified by all kinds of help, so as to be well established, and that they would possess so much public authority as to have strength enough to resist all enemies; in short, that they would gain the fruit of conquest, and constrain all nations to be tributaries to them.

If any one asks when has this been fulfilled, my answer is, that some preludes of this were given when God raised up the Maccabees, and made the Jews again to live according to their own laws, and to enjoy their own rights; but no doubt the Prophet includes the whole course of redemption. As then God redeemed his people only to a small extent until Christ appeared, it is no wonder that Zechariah, in speaking of full and complete redemption, extends his words to the kingdom of Christ, and this was necessary. We hence learn, that the Church stands abundantly firm, and is also furnished with all needful things, while it continues under the protection of God, and that it is endued with sufficient power to resist all its enemies. It follows—

5. And they shall be as mighty *men*, which tread down *their enemies* in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the Lord *is* with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.	5. Et erunt quasi fortes, (*aut*, gigantes,) calcantes in luto platearum in prœlio; et prœliabuntur, quia Iehova cum ipsis; et pudefient ascensores equorum.

He confirms what I have already said—that the Jews

so as to form a part of the building, and on which household stuff and instruments of war were suspended. The first is probably here intended, as it fastened and secured the tent, so the inferior officers of the state, next to the leaders or chiefs, were a strength to the community. See *Lowth* on Is. xxii. 23. See Ezra ix. 8; Ezek. xv. 3.

"Exactor" is the most common meaning of נגש; but here, as in Is. lx. 17, it seems to signify a ruler, a military chief, or a conqueror, as the "corner-stone" denotes the civil chief.

In a series of sentences, which have only one verb, our mode is to put the verb in the first clause; but the Hebrews set it in the last, as we find to be the case here, as well in the last verse of the last chapter. This verse then ought to be rendered thus—

From him shall come forth the corner-stone,
From him the stake,
From him the bow of war,
From him only every conqueror,
or,
From him every ruler altogether.—*Ed.*

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would be victorious over all nations. Though the Church is fighting under the cross, she yet triumphs over all the wicked, partly by hope and partly by present success; for God wonderfully sustains it, and makes the faithful to possess their souls in patience; and he also protects them by his own power, and renders them safe amidst all the roarings and insatiable rage of their enemies. Since then God thus strengthens the minds of his people, and cherishes in them the hope of salvation, and also defends them against raging assaults, it is no wonder that the Prophet testifies that the Church would be victorious, treading down, as a giant or a strong man, her enemies in the mire.

He gives the reason, *For Jehovah will be with them;* and this he said, that they might know that nothing in this case would be their own, but that they might, on the contrary, learn to depend on God's aid alone. And he explains this still more clearly at the end of the verse, by saying, *Ashamed shall be the riders on horses;*[1] that is, their strength and valour, their use of arms and their skill in handling them, shall avail them nothing, for the Lord will lay prostrate, notwithstanding their arrogance and pride, all those wicked men who in their cruelty devour the faithful, and think that they have strength more than enough to destroy the Church: the Lord will cause all these things to pass away like mist.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since constant fightings await us here, and our infirmities are so great that without thy power supporting us we cannot but fall every moment,—O grant, that we may learn to recumb on that help which thou hast promised, and which thou hast also offered to us, and dost daily offer through the Gospel in thine only-begotten Son; and may we distrust our own strength, yea, may we be overwhelmed with despair as to ourselves, not indeed that we may despond, but that we may look upward and seek the aid of thy Spirit, so that we may not doubt but that we shall be equal to our enemies, and even be victorious over them, until having at length finished our warfare, we shall reach that blessed rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only Son.—Amen.

[1] *Henderson* says, that this refers to the numerous cavalry of the Syro-Grecian army. See 1 Macc. iii. 39.—*Ed.*

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Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-sixth.

6. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I *am* the Lord their God, and will hear them.

6. Et roborabo domum Iehudah, et domum Ioseph servabo, et redire (habitare) eos faciam; quia misertus sum eorum, et erunt ac si non abominatus fuissem eos; quia ego Iehova Deus eorum, et exaudiam eos.

ZECHARIAH pursues the same subject,—that the work of redemption, the beginning of which the Jews saw, would not be incomplete, for the Lord would at length fulfil what he had begun. The Jews themselves could not acquiesce in those beginnings, which were not a hundredth part of what God had promised; it was hence necessary for them to raise up their minds above, that they might hope for much more than what was evident before their eyes.

And this truth is very useful to us, for we are wont to confine God's promises to a short duration of time, and when we thus include him within narrow limits, we prevent him as it were to do what we stand in need of. Let then the example of the return of the people of Israel ever come to our minds, for the Lord had promised by his Prophets that they would become very eminent, and in every way rich and happy; but when this did not take place after their return to their country, many of the Jews thought that they had been deceived, as they had expected God to fulfil his word immediately, but they ought to have suspended their hope and expectation until Christ came to the world. On this then the Prophet now insists—that the Jews were to rest patiently, until the ripened time came, when the Lord would prove that he is not only in part but a complete redeemer of his people.

Now he says, *I will strengthen the house of Judah, and the house of Joseph will I save.* The kingdom of Israel, we know, had by degrees wholly fallen; for at first four tribes were driven into exile, and afterwards the whole people perished, so that all thought that the name of the ten tribes had become extinct. The Lord afterwards visited the king-

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dom with dreadful ruin. But it must be observed, that while the two kingdoms existed, they entertained grievous enmities towards each other; for the defection which happened under Jeroboam, ever made the Jews violently to hate their brethren, the Israelites, as they indeed deserved; for they had in a manner rejected God by rejecting the son of David, and became in a manner alienated from the body of the Church. Now then Zechariah promises something uncommon, when he says that the two peoples shall be united, so as to be again one, as before the defection: for the house of Joseph means the same as the house of Ephraim; and we know that by taking a part for the whole, the house of Ephraim is taken for the whole kingdom of Israel. We now then understand the Prophet's meaning—that the state of the people would be happier than it had been since the ten tribes separated from the kingdom of Judah, or from the house of David; for God would gather for himself a Church from all the children of Abraham.[1]

He then adds, *I will bring them back and cause them to dwell.* The verb here, הושבותים, *eushebutim*, is supposed to be derived from שב, *sheb*, or from שוב, *shub;* but they are mistaken who think these to be words of different meanings, because some refer to the one root, and others to the other; nor can this be maintained: but those who minutely consider the rules of grammar, say that the verb is a compound, and means that God would not only restore the ten tribes, but also make them to dwell, that is, give them a fixed habitation in their country.[2]

[1] The opinion of those who regard this prophecy as having been accomplished in the history of the Jews before the coming of Christ, is that "the house of Joseph" were those of the ten tribes who had joined themselves to the tribe of Judah. So *Grotius* says, and *Henderson* observes, "It is clear from the reference thus made, that part, if not most of all the tribes, returned and took possession of their patrimonial lands after the captivity. But *Scott* and *Adam Clarke*, though they allow that this prophecy was in part fulfilled when the Jews successfully resisted their Syro-Grecian enemies, yet think that its full accomplishment is yet future; while *Calvin* evidently considers that a spiritual union in Christ is intended, conveyed in a language borrowed from the civil condition of the Jews.—*Ed.*

[2] *Kimchi* says that ישב, to dwell, and שוב, to return, are included in this verb; but of such amalgamation there are no examples. The true

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He then adds, *Because I have pitied them.* Some read this in the future tense, but I retain the past, for the Lord assigns here a reason for their future gathering, even because he would deal mercifully with his people. He recalls then the attention of the Jews to the fountain of his mercy, as if he had said, "Though they have deserved perpetual ruin, He will yet hear their groanings, because he will be propitious to them." As their calamity was an hinderance, which prevented the Jews from expecting any such thing, he adds, *They shall be as though I had not cast them away.* By which words he reminds them that the punishment which had been inflicted on the people, would be only for a time. He then bids them to take courage, though they were like the lost or the dead, for he would put an end to their miseries. And when God says that he *had cast away* his people, it ought to be taken according to the perceptions of men, as we have observed elsewhere; for adoption was unchangeable, but external appearance could have led to no other conclusion, but that the people had been rejected by God. The meaning of the Prophet is, however, clearly this—that though God had dealt severely with that people, and inflicted on them the heaviest punishment on account of their perfidy, yet his vengeance would not be for ever, for he would give place to mercy.

He adds another reason, *For I Jehovah am their God.* He means by this sentence that adoption would not be void, though he had for a time rejected the Jews: for by calling himself their God, he reminds them of his covenant, as though he had said, that he had not in vain made a covenant with Abraham, and promised that his seed would be blessed. Since then God had pledged his faith to Abraham, he says here that he would be the God of his people; not that they deserved anything, but because he had gratuitously chosen both Abraham and his seed.

He in the last place says, *And I will hear them.*[1] He

reading no doubt is either והשבתים, "and I will restore them," supported by six MSS., the *Targum*, the *Syriac*, and the *Vulgate*; or והושבתים, "and I will settle them," supported by the *Septuagint*.—*Ed.*

[1] Literally it is, "and I will answer them," ואענם;—και ἐπακούσομαι αυτοις

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seems here to exhort them to prayer, that, relying on this promise, they might ask of God what had been promised. Though this verb is often taken in a sense not strictly correct, for God is said to hear those who do not flee to him; but what I have stated is more suitable to this place—that the people are stimulated to prayer, as God freely invites us to himself for this end, that is, that our prayers may harmonise with his promises. This is the meaning. It now follows—

7. And *they of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty *man*, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see *it*, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the Lord.

7. Et erunt quasi gigas Ephraim, et lætabitur cor eorum sicuti à vino; et filii eorum videbunt et gaudebunt; exultabit cor eorum in Iehova.

He declares the same in other words: he had said in the last verse, that he would strengthen both the house of Judah and the house of Joseph, that is, the ten tribes; he now speaks of Ephraim alone, but includes the kingdom of Judah; and he names Ephraim, not because he deserved to be honoured, or to be preferred to the Jews, for Ephraim had become apostate; but because the return of the ten tribes was an event more incredible: this is clearly the reason why the Prophet expressly mentions Ephraim.[1] For even to the very destruction of the city and of the temple, God had continued to promise restoration to the Jews: the hope then of the Jews was certain and peculiar to themselves; but as to the Israelites, they were like a putrid carcass, for they had heard only something here and there, and received only some portion of the prophecies, as a grain of seed that falls outside of the field; for they were then as it were alienated from the people of God. We now then understand what the Prophet means by saying, that the Israelites would be like

—"and I will hear them," is the *Septuagint;* but the proper meaning of the verb is to answer; and so *Henderson* renders it.—*Ed.*

[1] The words literally are,—

And they shall be like a valiant man of Ephraim.

So the *Septuagint*, only the "valiant man" is taken in a collective sense, "And they shall be like the warriors (μαχηται) of Ephraim." With this corresponds the *Targum* and the *Syriac*. The fact is, that the words cannot be grammatically rendered otherwise.—*Ed.*

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giants; for though they had been cast down by their enemies, and then driven in great dishonour and disgrace into exile, and had been exposed to all kinds of reproaches, and oppressed by extreme bondage; yet God promises them the strength of giants.

Now we have said that the words contain a part for the whole; for this promise no doubt belongs especially to the Jews: there is yet no mention of them, though they were first in rank, and had a better ground of hope as to their return, and the Lord had already given them some proof.

He says, *Rejoice shall their heart as through wine; and see shall their sons and be glad; exult shall their heart in Jehovah.* It is certain that they had already a cause for joy, as it is said in the book of Psalms, "We became like those who dream, when the Lord restored his captives." (Ps. cxxvi. 1.) But the Prophet speaks here of a greater joy, that is, when they should see gathered all the tribes from their miserable and grievous dispersion: hence it is said in the same Psalm, "Gather, Lord, our captivity, like the stream in the south;" and then he adds, "They who sow in tears, in joy shall reap." In part then did the faithful lament, and in part did they rejoice: the beginning of redemption had raised their minds to joy; but on seeing their brethren still living under the tyranny of their enemies and having hardly a hope of restoration, they could not but mourn. Now the Prophet here declares, that their joy would be full, when their complete restoration came.

And he extends this joy to their *sons;* for it was needful to restrain their ardour in expecting a full favour, as they ever closed up their way to God by their complaints, according to what we do when we give loose reins to our wishes, for we then in a manner turn away from God. In order then to teach the people patience, the Prophet says, "Though ye see not this to-day with your eyes, yet your sons shall at length see it." We now perceive that he here exhorts them to patience, that they might not anticipate with too much haste the promises of God.

Of the metaphor it is not needful to say much: he compares to the drunken, or to such as become cheerful through

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drinking, those who rejoice in the Lord, not that he expresses an approval of drunkenness, but because he wished to show that it would be no common joy, as though they were carried away beyond themselves. It would be then superfluous to move here the question, whether it be right to seek joy by drinking freely. It is indeed true that hilarity is connected with the lawful use of wine (Ps. civ. 15;) but as we are too prone to excess, we ought to restrain the lusts of the flesh rather than to seek some colour of excuse for a sinful indulgence. But as I have said, this question does not belong to the present passage. It follows—

8. I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.

8. Sibilabo illis et congregabo eos, quia redemi eos; et multiplicabuntur sicuti multiplicati sunt.

The same is the object of this verse. By the word whistle, Zechariah means what it imports in other passages,—that it will not be an arduous work for God; for we are wont to measure his works by what our flesh understands. Since then the Jews might have easily raised this objection,—that their brethren were dispersed through various countries and among many nations, so that the assembling of them was incredible, the Prophet meets this objection and says, that God was able by mere whistling or by a single nod to restore them to their country. God is sometimes said to whistle for the wicked, when he constrains them unwillingly to do him service, and employs them as instruments to execute his hidden purposes; for when great armies daily assemble, it is no doubt through the secret appointment of God. When therefore trumpets sound and drums beat, the Lord whistles from heaven, to lead the reprobate here and there as it pleases him. But in this passage the Prophet simply means, that though God may not have many heralds nor an equipped army to open a way for his people, he will be satisfied with whistling only; for when it should please him, a free passage would be made for captives, though the whole world were to hinder their return. These two words then are to be joined together, *I will whistle for them and gather them;* as though

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Zechariah had said, that the nod of God would alone be sufficient, whenever he designed to gather the people.[1]

He then adds, *For I have redeemed them.* Here also I retain the past time, as the verb is in the past tense: for God speaks of redemption already begun, as though he had said, "I have promised that your exile would only be for a time; I have already appeared in part as your Redeemer, and I will not discontinue my work until it be completed." God then no doubt confirms here what I have stated,—that as he had begun in some measure to redeem his people, a complete redemption was to be expected, though the distressed could hardly believe this. But they ought to have felt assured, that God, as it is said in Ps. cxxxviii. 1, would not forsake the work of his hands. Hence by the consideration of what had commenced he encourages the Jews here to entertain confidence, so that they might with composed minds look for the end, and doubt not but that the whole people would be saved; for the Lord had already proved himself to be their Redeemer.[2] It is indeed true that this had not been fulfilled as to all the Israelites: but we must ever remember, that gratuitous election so existed as to the whole people, that God had notwithstanding but a small flock, as Paul teaches us. (Rom. xi. 5.) The Prophet at the same time intimates that Christ would be the head of the Church, and would gather from all parts of the earth the Jews who had been before scattered; and thus the promised restoration is to be extended to all the tribes. It afterwards follows—

9. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in

9. Et seminabo eos in populis, et in remotis partibus re-

[1] The word rendered here "whistle," is rendered "hist," by *Lowth*, in Is. v. 26; vii. 18; and he quotes *Cyril*, who says, "It is a metaphor taken from the practice of those who keep bees; who draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again by a hiss or a whistle." This is probable, for it is connected in Is. vii. 18 with the fly and the bee. *Grotius* takes the metaphor from the whistle of the shepherd, by which he collects his sheep.—*Ed.*

[2] The verb for "redeem" is in the past time, preceded by כִּי, *for*, *because*, or *when*. The *Septuagint* give the future time, "because I shall redeem them." *Jun.* and *Trem.*, and *Piscator* read thus, "when I shall redeem them." There is a similar phrase in verse 6, and in a like manner connected, which may be rendered in the same way, "when I shall pity them," instead of, "for I have pitied them:" for כִּי, as well as וְ, has sometimes a conversive power, at least it turns the past to a future time.—*Ed.*

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far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again.

cordabuntur mei, et vivent cum filiis suis et revertentur.

He continues the same subject, and employs here a most suitable metaphor—that the dispersion of the people would have a better issue than what any one then could have conceived, for it would be like sowing. The verb for scattering or sowing is often taken in a bad sense; for when people rested in their country, they ought then to have considered that they were living under God's protection. Dispersion, then, was an evidence of a curse, and it is often so taken by Moses. Now God uses it here in an opposite meaning, as though he had said, that he would at his pleasure turn darkness into light. The meaning then is, that the people had been dispersed through God being angry with them, but that the issue of this dispersion would be joyful; for the Jews would dwell everywhere, and be God's seed, and thus be made to produce abundant fruit. We then see that the meaning is, that God's favour would surpass the wickedness of the people; for those would bear fruit who had been scattered, and scattered because God would no longer exercise care over them, and defend them in the promised land. As God then had so often threatened by Moses that he would scatter the Jews, he now says in another sense, that he *would sow* them, and for this end—that they might everywhere produce fruit.[1]

It was an instance of the wonderful grace of God, that he

[1] The sowing here, as admitted by all, evidently means scattering; yet the verse is rendered differently. *Dathius* and *Henderson* render the first ו "though," and the second "yet." This and the following verse may be thus translated—

9. Though I shall scatter them among the nations,
   Yet in remote parts shall they remember me;
   And they shall live, even their children, and return:
10. Yea, I will restore them from the land of Egypt,
   And from Assyria will I gather them;
   And to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them,
   And no place shall be found for them.

"And they shall live" I take to mean, that they should live, not themselves, but in their children. But *Dathius* and *Newcome* follow the *Septuagint*—"And they shall cherish (*or*, preserve) their children," which the Hebrew will not bear; and *Marckius* and *Henderson* give the same version with *Calvin*—"And they shall live with their children."—*Ed.*

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so ordered his dreadful judgment as to make the dispersion, as it has been said, a sowing of the people; for it hence happened, that the knowledge of celestial truth shone everywhere; and at length when the gospel was proclaimed, a freer access was had to the Gentiles, because Jews were dispersed through all lands. The first receptacles (*Hospitia*) of the gospel were the synagogues. We see that the apostles everywhere went first to the Jews, and when a few were converted, the door was now opened that more might come, and Gentiles were also added to the Jews. Thus the punishment of exile, which had been inflicted on them, was the means of opening the door for the gospel; and God thus scattered his seed here and there, that it might in due time produce fruit beyond the expectation of all; and this consideration availed not a little to moderate the impatient desires of the people; for the Prophet intimates that this alone ought to have satisfied them—that their exile would be productive of good, for the Lord would thereby gather much people to himself. Had the Jews been confined within their own borders, the name of the God of Israel would not have been heard of elsewhere; but as there was no part of the East, no part of Asia and of Greece, which had not some Jews—and they inhabited many cities of Italy—hence it was that the Apostles found, as we have said, wherever they came, some already prepared to embrace the gospel.

He afterwards adds, *They shall remember me in distant lands.* He shows the manner how the memory of God would be preserved: though the Jews sacrificed not in the temple, though they dwelt not in the holy land, they would yet ever worship the only true God; as then the seed cast on the ground, though it may not appear, and seem even to be wholly lost, being apparently consumed by rottenness, does yet germinate in its season, and produces fruit; so God teaches us, that the memory of his name will occasion this people to fructify in their dispersion. But as God promises this, we hence learn that it is through his singular kindness that we cherish piety in our hearts, when he sharply and severely chastises us. When therefore we cease not to worship God, it is certain that we are kept by his Spirit; for

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were this in the power of man, this promise would be useless, and even absurd.

He says further, *They shall live with their sons, and shall return.* He again speaks of sons, that the Jews might not make too much haste; for we know that men, having strong desires, hurry on immoderately. That they might not then prescribe time to God, the Prophet reminds them that it ought to have been enough for them that the Lord would quicken them as it were from the dead, together with their children. He however promises them a return, not that they would return to their own country, but that they would be all united by the faith of the gospel. Though then they changed not their place, nor moved a foot from the lands where they sojourned, yet a return to their country would be that gathering which would be made by the truth of the gospel, as it is well known, according to the common mode of speaking adopted by all the Prophets. It follows—

10. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and *place* shall not be found for them.

10. Et reducam eos è terra Egypti, et ex Assur (ex Assyria) congregabo eos; et ad terram Gilead et Libani adducam eos; et non invenietur illis.

He confirms the same prediction—that though the Jews were like broken pieces, they were yet to entertain hope of their return and future restoration, since God was able to gather them from the remotest parts whenever he stretched forth his hand. He then names Egypt and Assyria, that the Jews might know that the redemption here promised is equally open to them all, however far separated they might be. For though Egypt was not very far from Assyria, yet they who had fled to Egypt were regarded with more dislike than the rest, who had been forcibly driven into exile; for God had pronounced a curse on the flight of those who sought refuge in Egypt. Since then they were hated by the others, and as a hostile discord existed between them, the Prophet says that the gathering of which he speaks would belong to both.[1]

[1] This promise of restoration from Egypt and Assyria is considered by *Grotius*, *Dathius*, and *Henderson*, as having been fulfilled literally. *Gro-*

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He then adds, that such would be the number of men, that there would be no place for them; for so ought these words to be understood, *There shall not be found for them;* that is, "They will cover the whole land," according to what we have observed elsewhere. It is said in Isaiah, "Secede from me," not that the faithful, when God shall increase his Church, will molest one another, or desire to drive away their brethren; but by this mode of speaking Isaiah means that the Church will be filled with such number of men that they will press on one another. So also now Zechariah says, that the number of people will be so great, that the place will be hardly large enough for so vast a multitude. It follows—

11. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up; and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.

11. Et transibit in mari afflictio, et percutiet in mari fluctus; et arescent omnes profunditates fluminis: et dejicietur superbia Assur, et sceptrum Egypti recedet.

The Prophet confirms what he had said respecting the power of God, which is so great that it can easily and without any effort lay prostrate all the mighty forces of the world. As then the impediments which the Jews observed might have subverted their hope, the Prophet here removes them; he reminds the Jews that God's power would be far superior to all the impediments which the world could throw in their way. But the expressions are figurative, and allusions are made to the history of the first redemption.

Pass through the sea shall distress. As God formerly gave to his people a passage through the Red Sea, (Ex. xiv.

tius says that one hundred and twenty thousand were restored from Egypt [a larger number than what was restored from Babylon] by Ptolemy Philadelphus, and that many were restored from Assyria by Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, and by Demetrius; and he refers to Josephus's Wars of the Jews, xiii. 4, 5, 7, 8. But it appears that *Calvin*, with many of the Fathers, and some moderns, such as *Marckius* and *Henry*, viewed the prophecy as fulfilled in a spiritual sense, that is, in the spiritual restoration of the Jews, the language being taken from what belonged to a temporal restoration. But *Scott* and *Adam Clarke* seemed disposed to regard this prophecy as yet to be fulfilled, in the restoration of the Jews to their own land, as well as to the faith of the gospel.—*Ed.*

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21;) so the Prophet now testifies that this power was unchangeable, so that God could easily restore his people, though the sea was to be dried up, and rivers were to be emptied. He says first, *Pass shall distress through the sea*, that is, spread shall distress, &c., for so the verb עבר, *ober*, is to be taken here. *Pass* then *shall distress through the sea*,[1] that is, the Lord will terrify the sea, and so shake it with his power that the waters will obey his command. But he afterwards explains himself in other words, *He will smite the waves in the sea.* He means that God's command is sufficient to change the order of nature, so that the waters would immediately disappear at his bidding. He then adds, *All the depths of the river shall dry up;* some read, "shall be ashamed," deriving the verb from בוש, *bush;* but it comes from יבש, *ibesh:* and this indeed means sometimes to be ashamed, but it means here to dry up. Others regard it as transitive, "The wind shall dry up the depths." But as to the object of the Prophet, the passive or active sense of the verb is of no moment; for the Prophet no doubt means here, that there would be so much force in the very nod of God as to dry up rivers suddenly, according to what happened to Jordan; which being smitten by the rod of Moses dried up and afforded a passage to the people.

He at length speaks clearly, *Cast down shall be the pride of Asshur, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart.* In the preceding metaphor Zechariah alludes, as I have said, to the first redemption, as it was usual with all the Prophets to remind the people of the former miracles, that they might

[1] So *Pagninus*, *Drusius*, and the *Syriac*. The *Septuagint*, the *Arabic*, the *Vulgate*, and also *Jerome*, give a different version —"And he shall pass through the narrow sea," or, "through the straits of the sea:" and this is the obvious meaning of the Hebrew, which is literally, "and he shall pass through the sea of straitness," or narrowness, *i. e.*, through the (or a) narrow sea; the allusion is evidently to the Red Sea, which is narrow. *Henderson* connects צרה as a verb with the following line—

He shall cleave and smite the waves of the sea.

He derives the peculiar sense of "cleaving" from the Chaldee צרא: but this is not necessary, for the other meaning is quite suitable, and countenanced by good authorities. *Blayney* gives this version—

And some shall pass over the sea to Tyre;

which is quite without any meaning in this connection, there being nothing in the passage to lead us to Tyre.—*Ed.*

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expect from the Lord in future what their fathers had witnessed. He now however declares, that God would be the Redeemer of his people, though the Assyrians on one side, and the Egyptians on the other, were to attempt to frustrate his purpose; for they could effect nothing by their obstinacy, as God could easily subdue both. He at last adds—

12. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.	12. Et roborabo eos in Iehova; et in nomine ejus ambulabunt, dicit Iehova.

Here at length he includes the substance of what we have noticed, that there would be sufficient help in God to raise up and support his people, and to render them victorious over all their enemies. He had already proved this by saying, that God had formerly sufficiently testified by many miracles how much superior he was to the whole world; but he briefly completes the whole of this proof, and shows, that the Jews, provided that they relied on God and expected from him what he had promised, would be sufficiently strong, though the whole power of the world were to rise up against them.

He also mentions the name of God, *They shall walk*, he says, *in his name*, that is, under his auspices. In short, there is here an implied contrast between the name of God and the wealth and the forces of their enemies, which might have filled the minds of the faithful with fear, and cast them down. Hence the Prophet bids the Jews to give the glory to God, and not to doubt but that they would be victorious, whatever hinderance the world might throw in their way. And by this word *walk*, he means a continued course of life, as though he had said, that the people indeed had returned from exile, that is, in part; but that more of them were to be expected, for the Lord had not only been a leader in their return, but that he would be also their perpetual guardian, and defend them to the end.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are constrained continually to groan under the burden of our sins, and the captivity in which we are held justly exposes us to continual trembling and sorrow,—O grant, that the deliverance, already begun, may inspire us with the hope, so as to expect more from thee than what we can see with our eyes; and may we continually call on thee until thou completest what thou hast begun, and puttest to flight both Satan and our sins, so that being in true and full liberty devoted to thee, we may be partakers of that power which has already appeared in our Head, until having at length passed through all our contests, we may reach that blessed rest, where we shall enjoy the fruit of our victory in Christ our Lord.—Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-seventh.

1. Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.
2. Howl, fir-tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.
3. *There is* a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

1. Aperi, Libane, portas tuas, et vorabit ignis cedros tuas:
2. Ulula abies, quia cecidit cedrus, quia fortes (*vel*, præstantes) vastati sunt; ululate quercus Bashan, quia descendit (*hoc est*, excisa est, *vel*, prostrata) sylva munita.
3. Vox ululatus pastorum, quia vastata est præstantia eorum (*vel*, fortitudo;) vox rugitus leonum, quia vastata est superbia Iordanis.

This Chapter contains severe threatenings, by which God designed in time to warn the Jews, that if there was any hope of repentance, they might be restored by fear to the right way, and that others, the wicked and the reprobate, might be rendered inexcusable, and also that the faithful might fortify themselves against the strong temptation to despond on seeing so dreadful a calamity awaiting that nation.

This prophecy does not indeed seem consistent with the preceding prophecies; for the Prophet has been hitherto not only encouraging the people to entertain hope, but has also

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declared that their condition would be so happy that nothing would be wanting to render them really blessed: but now he denounces ruin, and begins with reprobation; for he says, that God had been long the shepherd of that nation, but that now he renounced all care of them; for being wearied he would no longer bear with that perverse wickedness, which he had found in them all. These things seem to be inconsistent: but we may observe, that it was needful in the first place to set before the Jews the benefits of God, that they might with more alacrity proceed with the work of building the temple, and know that their labour would not be in vain; and now it was necessary to change the strain, lest hypocrites, vainly confiding in these promises, should become hardened, as it is commonly the case; and also, lest the faithful should not entertain due fear, and thus go heedlessly before God; for nothing is more ruinous than security, inasmuch as when a license is taken to sin, God's judgment impends over us. We hence see how useful and reasonable was this warning of the Prophet, as he made the Jews to understand, that God would not be propitious to his people without punishing their wickedness and obstinacy.

In order to render his prophecy impressive, Zechariah addresses *Libanon;* as though he was God's herald, he bids it to open its gates, for the whole wood was now given up to the fire. Had he spoken without a figure, his denunciation would not have had so much force: he therefore denounces near ruin on Libanon and on other places. Almost all think that by Libanon is to be understood the temple, because it was built with timber from that mountain; but this view seems to me frigid, though it is approved by the common consent of interpreters. For why should we think the temple to be metaphorically called Libanon rather than Bashan? And they think no such thing of Bashan, though there is equally the same reason. I therefore regard it simply as the Mount Libanon; and I shall merely refer to what Josephus declares, that the temple was opened before the city was destroyed by Titus. But though that history may be true, and it seems to me probable, it does not hence follow that this prophecy was then fulfilled, according to what

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is said of Rabbi Jonathan, who then exclaimed, "Lo! the prophecy of Zechariah; for he foretold that the temple would be burnt, and that the gates would be previously opened." These things seem plausible, and at the first view gain our approbation. But I think that we must understand something more solid, and less refined: for I doubt not but that the Prophet denounces complete ruin on Mount Libanon, and on Bashan and other places.[1]

But why does he bid Libanon to open its gates? The reason is given, for shortly after he calls it a fortified forest, which was yet without walls and gates. Libanon, we know, was nigh to Jerusalem, though far enough to be free from any hostile attack. As then the place was by nature sufficiently safe from being assailed, the Prophet speaks, as though Libanon was surrounded by fortresses; for it was not exposed to the attacks of enemies. The meaning is,—that though on account of its situation the Jews thought that Libanon was not exposed to any evils, yet the wantonness of enemies would lead them even there. We have already said why the Prophet bids Libanon to open its gates, even because he puts on the character of a herald, who threatens and declares, that God's extreme vengeance was already nigh at hand.

He then adds, *Howl thou, fir-tree, for the cedar has fallen.* No doubt the Prophet by naming Libanon, mentioning a part for the whole, meant the whole of Judea: and it appears evident from the context that the most remarkable places are here mentioned; but yet the Prophet's design was to show, that God would punish the whole people, so as

[1] Both Jewish and Christian expounders for the most part have regarded the temple as meant by Libanon; with whom *Blayney* and *Henderson* agree. But the whole context clearly favours the opinion of *Calvin*, which has been followed by *Marckius* and *Henry*. There is in what follows no allusion to the temple, but the "land," ver. 6, is expressly mentioned. The "cedars" evidently represented the chief men in the state, not in the temple, called in the second verse "the mighty" ones. Indeed the whole of what follows countenances this idea, that the Jewish state or land is what is intended. What has chiefly led to the notion, that the temple is intended, is the fact that it was built by cedars from Libanon: but the burning of the cedars mentioned here does not represent the burning of the temple, but the destruction of the chief men in the land of Judah; and this consideration alone is fatal to the notion.—*Ed.*

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not to spare Jerusalem or any other place. And then by the fir-trees and cedars he meant whatever then excelled in Judea or in other places; and for this reason he compares them to the cedars of Libanon, as though he had said, "There is no reason for the fir-trees to regard themselves as beyond the reach of danger; for if he spares not the cedars, what will become of the fir-trees, which possess no such stateliness and grandeur?"

We now then perceive the Prophet's meaning as to the trees: but he includes, as I have said, under one kind, whatever was valuable in Judea; and this we learn more clearly from what follows: for he adds, *Fallen have*, or laid waste have been, *the strong*.[1] Some read in the neuter gender, "Laid waste have been splendid things;" but I am inclined to regard persons as intended. The Prophet then now simply declares, that the vengeance of God was nigh all the great ones, whom dignity sheltered, so that they thought themselves in no danger. And for the same purpose he adds, *Howl, ye oaks of Bashan*. He joins, as we see, Bashan to Libanon; there is then no reason for allegorizing only one of the words, when they are both connected. And he says, *For fallen has the fortified forest*. Either this may be applied to Libanon, or the Prophet may be viewed as saying in general, that there was no place so difficult of access, which would not be penetrated into, when the Lord should give liberty to enemies to destroy all things. Though then the density of trees protected these mountains, yet the Prophet says that nothing would obstruct God's vengeance from penetrating into the inmost recesses of strongholds.

He then adds, *The voice of the howling of shepherds; for their excellency*, or their courage, *is laid waste*. Here he has אדר, *ader*, and before אדירים, *adirim*, in the masculine gender. We see then that the Prophet confirms the same thing in other words, "Howl now," he says, "shall the shepherds." He intimates that the beginning of this dread-

[1] The word means illustrious, stately, magnificent, glorious. It may apply to the cedars, or to the rulers or chief men, represented by the cedars, which is most probable: they are afterwards called shepherds and lions.—*Ed.*

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ful judgment would be with the chief men, as they were especially the cause of the public ruin. He then says, that the dignity of the great was now approaching its fall, and hence he bids them to howl. He does not in these words exhort them to repentance, but follows the same strain of doctrine. By God's command he here declares, that the shepherds who took pride in their power, could not escape the judgment which they had deserved: and as this is a mode of speaking usually adopted by the Prophets, I shall no longer dwell on the subject.

He afterwards adds, *The voice of the roaring of lions.* He no doubt gives here the name of lions, by way of metaphor, to those who cruelly exercised their power over the people. But he also alludes to the banks of Jordan, where there were lions, as it is well known. Since then lions were found along the whole course of Jordan, as it is evident from many passages, he compares shepherds to lions, even the governors who had abused their authority by exercising tyranny over the people: *Fallen* then *has the pride* or the excellency *of Jordan.* In short, it is now sufficiently evident, that the Prophet threatens final destruction both to the kingdom of Judah and to the kingdom of Israel. Both *kingdoms* were indeed then abolished; but I speak of the countries themselves. The meaning is—that neither Judea nor the land of the ten tribes would be free from God's vengeance.[1] He afterwards adds—

[1] The whole passage, including the three first verses, is remarkably concise, striking, and poetical,—

1. Open, Lebanon, thy doors,
   That consume may the fire thy cedars:
2. Howl thou the fir-tree;
   For fallen is the cedar,
   Because the magnificent are wasted.
   Howl, ye oaks of Bashan;
   For come down is the forest, the fenced one.
3. The voice of the howling of shepherds!
   Because wasted is their magnificence;
   The voice of the roaring of lions!
   For wasted is the pride of Jordan.

There is a correspondence between "consume" and "wasted." The Jewish rulers were called "shepherds" with regard to their office, and "lions" on account of their rapacity. Their "magnificence" was wasted, like that of the cedars when consumed by fire. The "pride of Jordan"

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4. Thus saith the Lord my God, Feed the flock of the slaughter;

5. Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed *be* the Lord; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not.

6. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver *them*.

4. Sic dicit Iehova, Deus meus, Pasce gregem occisionis.

5. Qui possident ipsum, occident (*hoc est*, occidunt) et non peccant; et qui vendit ipsum (gregem, *vel*, ipsas oves) dicit, Benedictus Iehova, et ditatus sum; et qui pascit eas, non parcit illis.

6. Quia (*vel*, certè) non parcam amplius incolis terræ, dicit Iehova; et ecce ego tradam (*vel*, trado, *vel*, venire faciens) hominem quemque in manum proximi sui, et in manum Regis sui; et conterent terram, et non eripiam è manu eorum.

Here is given a reason why God purposed to deal so severely with his people—even because their obstinacy deserved no pardon. As then in the beginning of the chapter the Prophet threatened ruin to the Jews, so now he reminds them that their punishment was nigh, and that they could not be more gently treated, because their wickedness was wholly incurable. We now perceive the design of the Prophet; but he charges the Jews especially with ingratitude, because they responded so basely and shamefully to the singular benefits of God.

He says first, that he was bidden to *feed the flock* destined to the *slaughter*.[1] Now the Prophet does not here relate simply what command he had received from God, but teaches us in general that God had ever performed the office of a good and faithful shepherd towards the Jews. The Prophet then assumes the character of all the shepherds, as though he had said, "There is no reason why this people should plead their ignorance, or attempt to disguise their own fault by other names and various pretences; for God has ever offered them a shepherd, and sent also ministers to guide and rule them: it is not to be ascribed to God that this

were the trees growing on its borders, which afforded shelter for lions. These became wasted or destroyed, so that the lions could find there no receptacle. All these things intimate the entire destruction of the Jewish state.—*Ed.*

[1] This "slaughter" has reference to the ruin and destruction denounced in the previous verses, or to what was done by "the possessors" who slew them, verse 5.—*Ed.*

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people has not enjoyed prosperity and happiness." There is now no need of spending much labour about this verse, as interpreters have done who confine what is here said to Christ alone, as one who had received this office from the Father; for we shall see from the passage itself that the Prophet's words are by them forcibly wrested from their meaning.

Let it then be borne in mind, that his special object is to show—that God had ever been ready to rule this people, so that he could not have been accused by them of not having done what could have been possibly looked for or expected from a good shepherd. If any one objects and says, that this could have been said in other words, the plain answer is—that God's perpetual care in his government had been fully shown; for he had not only himself performed the duties and office of a shepherd, but had also at all times set over them ministers, who performed faithfully their work. Since God then had so constantly and sedulously watched over the safety of the people, we see that their ingratitude was wholly proved. And by calling it *the flock of slaughter*, a reference is made to the time of the Prophet; for the Jews were then as though they had been snatched from the jaws of wolves, having been delivered from exile. They were then as dead sheep, whom the Lord had rescued; and we also know to how many troubles and dangers they had been constantly exposed. And hence appeared more clearly the goodness of God; for he was pleased nevertheless to exercise care over his flock. Then the Prophet enlarges here on God's favour, because he had not despised his sheep though given up to the slaughter. The words might indeed be extended farther, as though the Prophet referred to what had already taken place, and they might thus be applied to many ages; but it seems to me more probable, that he mentions here what belonged to that age. Zechariah then teaches us why God was constrained to adopt extreme severity, even because he had tried all things that might have healed the people, and yet lost all his labour: when their wickedness became wholly incurable, despair as it were at length constrained God to exercise the severity mentioned here. This is, as I think, the meaning of the Prophet.

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He afterwards adds another circumstance, which shows still further the wonderful and ineffable goodness of God,—that he had been a shepherd of a flock, which had not only been harassed by wolves and robbers, but also by its own shepherds. In short, the import of the whole is,—that though wolves and robbers had ranged with great barbarity among the people, yet God had always been their shepherd.

He then enlarges on the subject and says, that they who *possessed them* had *killed* them, so that they *spared not.* By these words the Prophet shows that the safety of the people had been deemed as nothing by their very leaders: they could not then by any excellency of their own have induced God to show so much kindness to them. But these words ought to be attentively noticed,—that when the flock was slain, the executioners or butchers themselves had no mercy, for they thought it was a spoil justly due to them. We see how God extols here his own goodness; for he had condescended to defend and rule and feed that people, who were not only despised in the world, but counted as nothing, and the slaughtering of them deemed a lawful prey: they *sin not,*[1] he says, that is, they are not conscious of exercising any cruelty,—Why? because they thought that they justly enriched themselves, while they were plundering so wretched a flock. The more base, then, and inexcusable was the ingratitude of the people, when after having been so kindly received and so gently nourished by God, they yet rejected all his favours and suffered not themselves to be governed by his hand. And it is material to observe here, that these contrasts tend greatly to exaggerate the sins of men, and ought to be considered, that God's severity may not be blamed; for we know that many complain when God executes his judgments: they would measure all punishments by their own ideas, and subject God to their own will. In order therefore to check

[1] More correct is our version, "and held not themselves guilty." The *Targum* gives the idea, "and say, there is no sin upon us." The *Septuagint* have departed from the meaning of the verb, though the general import is retained, "and they repented not;" and the same may be said of *Jerome,* "and they grieved not." The version of *Henderson* is not right, "and are not held guilty." It is not what others thought of them, but what they thought of themselves, is evidently intended.—*Ed.*

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such complaints, the Prophet says, that though the flock was most contemptible, it had not yet been despised by God, but that he undertook the care of it.

The shepherds and masters said, *Blessed be Jehovah.* We are wont to give thanks to God when we really believe that the blessings we have come from him. The robber who kills an innocent man will not say, "Blessed be God;" for he on the contrary tries to extinguish every remembrance of God, because he has wounded his own conscience. The same may be also said of thieves. Hypocrites often profess the name of God; and they whose trade is cheating ever make a speech of this kind, "By God's grace I have gained so much this year;" that is, after having acquired the property of others by deceit, cheating, and plunder, they give thanks to God! and at the same time they flatter themselves by self-deception, as though all were a lawful prey; for, forsooth! they are not proved guilty before a human tribunal. Now the Prophet here adopts this common mode of speaking, by which men, not conscious of doing wrong, usually testify that their gain is just and lawful.

He then adds, *And he who fed them has not spared* them. The meaning is, that the people, according to the opinion commonly entertained, were not worthy of mercy and kindness. Hence, as I have said, the wonderful goodness of God shines forth more clearly; for he condescended to take the care of a flock that was wholly despised.[1] Then he says, *I will not spare the inhabitants of the land; behold I will deliver*, &c. To some it appears that there is here a reason given; for the Jews would have never been thus stripped, had not God been angry with them; as though he had said, that God's vengeance was just, inasmuch as they were thus

[1] There are in this verse, the fifth, several anomalies. The verbs, except one, are in the singular, and the nouns, "possessors," "sellers," and "shepherds," are in the plural number, and the pronoun affixed to "shepherds" is masculine, while that which is affixed to each of the two preceding words is feminine, referring to the antecedent, "sheep." There are MSS. and early versions in which these anomalies are rectified; and it is but reasonable to adopt such corrections. The meaning of the verse is evident; and it may be that some of these anomalies are idiomatic. A plural noun in Welsh has commonly a verb in the singular number when placed *after* it, which is often the case.—*Ed.*

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exposed to such atrocious wrongs. But according to my judgment God simply confirms what we have stated,—that his future vengeance on the Jews would be most just, because he had in feeding them so carefully laboured wholly in vain. For though the Prophet has not as yet expressed what we shall hereafter see respecting their ingratitude, he yet does not break off his discourse without reason, for indignation has ever some warmth in it; he then in the middle of his argument exclaims here, *I will not spare;* for God had spared the Jews, when yet all men exercised cruelty towards them with impunity; and when they were contemptible in the sight of all, he still had regarded their safety. As then they had been so ungrateful for so many acts of kindness, ought not God to have been angry with them? This is then the reason why the Prophet introduces here in God's name this threatening, *Surely I will not spare them;* that is, "I have hitherto deferred my vengeance, and have surpassed all men in kindness and mercy; but I have misplaced my goodness, and now there is no reason why I should longer suspend my judgment." *I will spare then no longer the inhabitants of this land.*

I will give, or deliver, he says, *every man into the hand of his friend;* as though he had said, "They are no longer sheep, for they will not bear to be ruled by my hand, though they have found me to be the best of shepherds. They shall now tear and devour one another; and thus a horrible dispersion will follow." Now the Jews ought to have dreaded nothing so much, as to be given up to destroy themselves by mutual slaughter, and thus to rage cruelly against one another and to perish without any external enemy: but yet God declares that this would be the case, and for this reason,—because he could not succeed with them, though willing to feed them as his sheep and ready to perform the office of shepherd in ruling them.[1]

[1] There is one phrase omitted, "and unto the hand of his king;" that is, "Antiochus," says *Grotius*,—"Herod," says *Drusius*,—"Cæsar," says *Henderson*. But no particular king seems intended, but a state of things is set forth, signifying the tyranny and oppression of the ruling power, which was verified in the condition of the Jews during a considerable period, until at last they were destroyed by one of the Cæsars, the emperor of

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He concludes by saying, *They shall smite the land, and I will not deliver from their hand.* He intimates in the last place that ruin without any remedy was nigh; for he alone was the only deliverer of the people; but now he testifies that their safety would not be the object of his care; for should he see them perishing a hundred times, he would not be moved with pity, nor turn to bring them help, inasmuch as they had precluded all compassion. It now follows—

7. And I will feed the flock of slaughter, *even* you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

7. Et pavi gregem occisionis, nempe (*vel*, ideoque) pauperes gregis: et sumpsi mihi duas virgas, unam vocavi Elegantiam (*vel*, Pulchritudinem;) et alteram vocavi Funiculos (*alii vertunt*, Perditores; *de hac voce dicemus;*) et pavi gregem.

He resumes here the thread of the discourse, which he had shortly before broken off; for he sets forth what had not yet been sufficiently expressed—that the ingratitude of the people, with which obstinacy was especially united, deserved entire ruin, and that now there was no hope of pardon; for the paternal care of God had been most basely and most shamefully repudiated, as well as the kind favour which he had manifested to the people.

God then complains that he had *fed the flock.* Some apply this to Zechariah; but, as I have said, God relates the acts of kindness which he had uniformly showed to the people, until they became wholly unworthy of his favour. Let us however remember that the Prophet speaks of the remnant; for he does not here recount the benefits of God in ancient times, but describes the state of the people after their return from their exile in Babylon. God seemed before to have committed this office to Zechariah—to feed them; but as I have already said, the design of that was no other than to make it evident that the whole fault was in

Rome. Inward discord, and the tyranny of those who ruled over them, characterised their history from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes until they were demolished as a nation by Titus and Vespasian. This seems to be the import of this prophecy. The singular number is used poetically: and this appears evident from the words which follow, "And they shall smite," or rather pound to pieces, "the land." The "king" is spoken of here as many—"they," so that a succession of tyrants is meant.—*Ed*

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the people; for they had thrust from them the kindness of God, and in a manner carried on war frowardly with God, so as to prevent any access for his favour. There is therefore here an expostulation in God's name.

I have fed, he says, *the flock of slaughter, even the poor of the flock.* Some render לכן, on account of; but it may be taken in an explanatory sense: or we may give this rendering—"therefore the poor," or, especially the poor. With regard to the meaning, God here intimates that he had manifested his care for the whole people, for he had hoped that there were a few sheep yet remaining worthy of having mercy shown to them. As then some poor sheep might have been found among the impure flock, God says, that having this hope, he did not deem it grievous or burdensome to undertake the office of a shepherd in ruling the people. *I have* then *fed the flock of slaughter*, even for this reason, he says, because there were some miserable sheep among them: I was therefore unwilling to forsake them, and preferred to try all means rather than to cast away even one little sheep, provided a single one were found in the whole flock.[1]

He says that he *took two rods*, that he *called one* נעם, *nom*, "Beauty," and that he *called the other* חבלים, *chebelim*, "Cords," rendered "destroyers" by those who adhere to the Hebrew points; but as חבל, both in the singular and plural, has the meaning of a rope or cord, the Prophet, I have no doubt, means by חבלים, *chebelim*, ropes or bindings. Grammar, indeed, does not allow this; but Zechariah did not set down the points, for they were not then in use. I indeed know with how much care the old scribes contrived the points, when the language had already ceased to be in com-

[1] This sentence has puzzled many, but needlessly. לכן has sometimes the meaning of כן, certainly, surely, in truth, Jer. v. 2; and it may be rendered here "especially," as Calvin does. The simple כן is used in a similar sense in verse 11, in connection with the same words in part, as here: and the words עניי הצאן in that verse, would lead us, by what is said of them, to consider them as "the poor of the flock," and not "the miserable sheep," as rendered by *Henderson*. The rendering of *Newcome* gives the same meaning—"because of the poor of the flock." He considers that לכן here signifies the same with למען, which is given in one MS., and agrees with the Syriac.—*Ed.*

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mon use. They then who neglect, or wholly reject the points, are certainly void of all judgment and reason; but yet some discrimination ought to be exercised;[1] for if we read here "destroyers," there is no meaning; if we read "cords," there is no letter changed, but only two points are altered. As then the subject itself necessarily demands this meaning, I wonder that interpreters suffer themselves to be servilely constrained, so as not to regard the design of the Prophet.

The Prophet then says, that he had taken two rods, that he might devote himself in a manner not common to the office of a shepherd. Shepherds were satisfied with one crook; for by rods he means here the crook used by shepherds. As then every shepherd carried his own crook, the Prophet says here that he was furnished with two crooks, or pastoral staffs, because the Lord surpassed all men in his solicitude in the office of ruling his people. But the remainder I must defer until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast hitherto so kindly showed thyself to be our Shepherd, and even our Father, and hast carefully provided for our safety,—O grant, that we may not by our ingratitude deprive ourselves of thy favours, so as to provoke thy extreme vengeance, but on the contrary suffer ourselves to be gently ruled by thee, and render thee due obedience: and as thine only-begotten Son has been by thee set over us as our only true Shepherd, may we hear his voice, and willingly obey him, so that we may be able to triumph with thy Prophet, that thy staff is sufficient for us, so as to enable us to walk without fear through the valley of the shadow of death, until we shall at length reach that blessed and eternal rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only Son.—Amen.

[1] *Grotius* speaks in a similar strain of the Punctuists, and agrees with *Jerome* and others in regarding the word of a similar import with that stated by *Calvin*. The 14th verse is a sufficient confirmation. It is rendered "σχοινισμα, bond," by the *Sept.*, *Agg.*, and *Sym.*—"funiculi, ropes or cords," by the *Vulg.*—"devincientes, binders," by *Drusius* and *Marckius;* and as in our version, "bands," by *Newcome* and *Henderson*.

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Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-eighth.

We said yesterday that the word חבלים, *chebelim*, the name given by Zechariah to the second rod, could not be rendered "destroyers," as all the Hebrews do; for God teaches us that he had fully and faithfully discharged the duties of a shepherd, so that the people perished through their own fault; and since God undertook the office of a shepherd, it could not have been said that he took a staff to destroy them: and there is also no doubt but that he connects this word with the other, נעם, *nom*, "beauty." And he says in the last place, that this rod called חבלים, *chebelim*, was broken, in order to show that the brotherhood between Judah and Israel was come to an end. Now what affinity can there be between destroying and uniting? It is then clear that the word חבלים, *chebelim*, is to be taken here for ropes, or cords.

Let us now see why the Prophet calls one "Beauty," and the other "Ropes." Some think that the law of nature is designated by נעם, *nom*, and by חבלים, *chebelim*, the law of Moses, and those who render the word "Lines," such as *Jerome*, who gives here the right version, think that as the law was a hard yoke on the ancients, the rod was so called because it bound them fast. Others, as *Jerome* also does, refer to this passage of Moses, "When the Lord cast his line, he chose a place for Israel, and when the Highest divided the nations," &c. They then think that a line is taken for an inheritance. But the first interpretation is too remote and distorted; with regard to the second, as the Prophet puts the word in the plural number, it cannot be suitably taken for an inheritance, and, as we said yesterday, the following clause shows that the idea of union is included in it.

The meaning of the Prophet then is, that God had so performed his office of a shepherd towards his people, as to rule them in the best manner; this I understand by the word נעם, *nom*, beauty, for nothing could have been more perfect in beauty than the government which God had exercised over the Israelites; and hence he compares here his pastoral

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staff to beauty, as though he had said, "The order of things was so arranged that nothing could be imagined better." He then mentions *unity* or concord, and it was the highest favour that God gathered again the scattered Israelites so as to make them one body. It is indeed true, that few of the kingdom of Israel had returned to their own country, but it is yet evident that the remnant was not only from the tribe of Judah, from the half tribe of Benjamin, and from the Levites, but that there were others mingled with them. It was therefore a most appropriate representation, that not only a most beautiful order was established by God, but that was also added a brotherly concord, so that the children of Abraham were joined together in one spirit and in one soul. Since then they had so good a shepherd, the baser and less excusable was their ingratitude in shaking off his yoke, and in not suffering themselves to be ruled by his staff.

We now then see what the words of the Prophet mean, when he introduces God as furnished with two rods, even beauty and gathering. He then repeats what he had said before, *I have fed*, he says, *the sheep*, intimating, that it was not owing to him that he should not continue to rule them. It now follows—

8. Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

8. Et rejeci tres pastores mense uno; et tædio affecta est (*ad verbum*, coarctata est) anima mea in ipsis; atque etiam anima eorum me abominata est.

At the beginning of the verse the Prophet continues the same subject, that God spared no pains in ruling the people, but patiently bore with many grievances; for it is the duty of every good and careful husbandman to inspect often his flock, and to change his shepherd, when he finds him idle and inattentive to his duties. God then shows that he had exercised the greatest vigilance, for *in one month he had rejected three shepherds*, that is, he had within a short space of time often made choice of new shepherds, and substituted them for others, for *one month* is to be taken here for a short time, and the *three shepherds* signify many, indefinitely. When a husbandman neglects his own flock, he may be deceived all the year round, should he meet with a thief or an inactive

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and worthless man. Since then God says, that he had changed his shepherds often in one month, he intimates what I have already said, that he took the greatest care of his flock, for he loved it, and omitted nothing necessary to to defend it.[1] And this circumstance especially aggravated the sin of the Jews, for they did not respond to so great a care on God's part; no, not when they saw that he watched night and day for their safety.

Now the latter part of the verse is a complaint, for God begins to set forth how base had been the wickedness and ingratitude of the people, *With weariness*, he says, *has my soul been affected by them*, and *their soul has hated me.*[2] He speaks not now of the shepherds, and they are mistaken who so read the passage, as though God had repudiated the shepherds, because his soul was wearied with them: on the contrary, he turns his discourse to the whole people, and begins to show how wicked they had been, who having been favoured with so many benefits, could not yet endure the best of shepherds. Hence he says, that his *soul had been straitened by them*, for he found no room made for his favours. Paul also, treating on this subject, expostulates with the Corinthians, and says, that he was ready to pour forth his heart and to open widely his mouth, but they themselves were straitened,

[1] This is a more satisfactory explanation than what has been by many offered; for most have made the attempt to fix on some three shepherds, either before or after this time. *Jerome* mentions Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; others have referred to the three sons of Josiah, to the three Maccabean brethren, and to the three last of the Asmonean princes. *Cyril* names the priests, civil rulers, and lawyers or scribes; and this is the explanation which *Henderson* prefers, and also *Scott* and *Adam Clarke*. *Newcome* has given no opinion. *Blayney* prefers another rendering, "and I set aside the authority of the shepherds," but this cannot be admitted. The view given by *Calvin* is the most reasonable, and comports with the character of what was conveyed by visions.—*Ed.*

[2] My soul was grieved at them, and their soul also loathed me.—*Newcome.*

My soul loathed them, and their soul also rejected me.—*Henderson.*

The first verb means grieved, vexed, or wearied, and not loathed. See Num. xxi. 24; Jud. x. 16; xvi. 16. "Wearied was my soul with them." The verb in the next clause is only found here, and rendered "roared," ἐμυκήσατο, by the *Septuagint*, (see Jer. xii. 7,) and "despised," by the *Targum*. It is said, that the word in the *Talmud* is used in the sense of despising and hating, and this idea suits this place, "and their soul also has despised me."—*Ed.*

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and he felt himself these straitenings in his own heart. (2 Cor. vi. 11.) So also God complains here and says, that he was straitened by the Jews; for he found that his blessings were not rightly received, but as it were hindered, so great was the wickedness of the people.

He expresses more clearly at the end that he was despised by them, *They also have hated me.* Now it was a contempt in no way excusable, when the Jews would not acknowledge how kindly and bountifully God had treated them. We now perceive the Prophet's design: after having related how kindly God had condescended to rule the people, he now says that this labour had produced no fruit, for the door for God's favours had been closed up. It afterwards follows—

9. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.

9. Et dixi, Non pascam vos; quod morti devotum est, moriatur; et quod succisioni devotum est, succidatur; et quæ residuæ erunt, devorent unaquæque carnem sociæ suæ.

God now declares what had been briefly mentioned before,—that his judgment could not be deemed cruel, for the people had been extremely wicked, and their wickedness deserved extreme punishment. It seems indeed to be a simple narrative; but God here defends his own cause, for he had tried all means in ruling the people, before he had recourse to extreme rigour. Who indeed could now murmur against God? for he had been ever ready to undertake the office of a shepherd, and had so humbled himself as to take care of that people as his own flock, and had, in short, omitted no kind of attention; and yet he had been despised by that people, and even treated with derision. It was therefore an extreme indignity when they hated God, who had yet dealt with them with so much kindness. We hence see that God's judgment is here vindicated from every calumny; for the wickedness of the people was altogether inexcusable before God had renounced his care of them.

I said: the time must be noticed, for he intimates that he had not been too hasty in taking vengeance; but that as there was no longer any remedy, he had been constrained, as it were by necessity, to give up his office of a shepherd.

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I said then, *I will not feed you; what is to die, let it die; what is to be cut off, let it be cut off.*[1] He here resigns his office of a shepherd, and intimates that he was innocent and free from all blame, whatever might happen. A shepherd is set over a flock for this purpose,—that he may defend it, even every sheep, both against the depredations of robbers, and the rapacity of wolves: but when he gives up his office, he is exempt from all blame, though afterwards the flock may be stolen or devoured by wolves and wild beasts. God then here openly declares, that it was not to be imputed to him, if the Jews perished a hundred times, for they refused to be ruled by him, and thus he was freed from the pastoral charge. *What* then *is to perish, let it perish;* that is, "Since they are not healable, and allow no remedy to be applied to their evils, I leave them; they shall find out what it is to be without a good shepherd."

We now see more clearly what I before stated,—that the wickedness and ingratitude of the people are here reproved, because they had rejected God, who was ready to be their shepherd,—and that the cause of the ruin which was nigh at hand, was in the Jews themselves, though they anxiously tried, but in vain, to transfer it to another.

He concludes with these words, *And those which remain*, even those who shall escape external attacks, *let them eat one another*, since they are not now sheep, but savage wild beasts. And this we know has been fulfilled; for the Jews at length perished through mutual discords, and no one spared his own brother; nay, the nearer the relationship, the more cruelly each raged against the other. Hence God's judg-

[1] The *Targum* renders the verbs in the future tense, "shall die—shall be cut off;" but the *Septuagint* and *Jerome*, in the imperative mood, as here. The verse may be thus rendered,—

9. And I said,—I will not feed you;
She that is to die, shall die;
And she that is to be cut off, shall be cut off;
And the remainder shall devour,
Each one the flesh of its (or her) fellow.

"The dying," or "the dead," and "the cut off," the literal rendering, clearly mean what was destined to die and to be cut off. Hence to render "cut off" here "missing," as done by *Blayney*, is not at all necessary.—*Ed.*

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ment, denounced by the Prophet, then appeared most openly, when the Jews perished through intestine broils and even slaughters. It then follows—

10. And I took my staff, *even* Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

11. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it *was* the word of the Lord.

10. Et accepi virgam meam, nempe Pulchritudinem, et confregi eam, ut irritum facerem fœdus quod pepigeram cum omnibus gentibus (*vel*, populis.)

11. Et irritum fuit die illo; et cognoverunt sic pauperes gregis qui me observabant, quòd sermo Iehovæ hic esset.

He confirms the same truth, but a metaphor is introduced: for he says, that when he freed himself from the office of a shepherd, he broke the two rods, even *Beauty* and *Gathering*. He speaks of the first staff, because things were in a confusion in Judea, before the people were wholly cut off; for the dispersion did not immediately take place, so that there was no sort of social state among the Jews; but social order was so deranged, that it was sufficiently evident that they were not ruled by God. By degrees the purity of doctrine was corrupted, and a flood of errors crept in; superstition gained great strength. When things were in this state of confusion, the pastoral staff was broken, which is called, Beauty. This verse then contains no more than an explanation of the last: and hence also he says, *That broken might be the covenant which I had made*, that is, that it might be now quite evident that this people are not ruled by my hand and authority.

Some interpreters extend to the whole world what is here said of nations, and think that the same thing is meant by Zechariah as that which is said in the second chapter of Hosea,—that the Lord made a covenant with the beasts of the earth and the birds of heaven, that no harm should happen to his people; but the comparison is not suitable. It is then probable, that God here speaks only of the posterity of Abraham; nor is it to be wondered at, that they are called nations, for even so Moses says, "Nations from thee shall be born," (Gen. xvii. 6:) and this was done for the purpose of setting forth the greatness of God's favour;

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for the ten tribes were as so many nations among whom God reigned. It seemed incredible, that from one man, not only a numerous family, but many nations should proceed. The real meaning then seems to be, that God testified that he would no longer be the leader of that people; for when order was trodden under foot, the covenant of God was made void. Why indeed was that covenant continued, and what was its design, except to keep things aright, in a fit and suitable condition? Thus in the Church, God regards order, so that nothing should be done rashly, according to every man's humour. This then was the beginning of that dispersion, which at length followed when the people had fallen off from the order which God had appointed.[1]

He concludes by saying, that *in that day the covenant was broken*. By which words he intimates that it was not by chance that the law was destroyed, and that the Jews departed from the just government of God, but that it was through the dreadful vengeance of God. *In that day* then: this is emphatical, as though the Prophet had said, "It ought not to be ascribed to chance that things have changed for the worse, for God has thus executed his judgment, after having with extreme patience borne with the wickedness of the people." And hence he adds, that *the poor of the flock saw that this was the word of Jehovah*. Here the Prophet briefly points out two things—that this was not commonly known as God's judgment, but that almost all with closed eyes overlooked what had happened; for the world contracts as it were hardness, and becomes wilfully obdurate under the scourges of God. All cry out that they are miserable, but no one regards the hand of the striker, as it is said elsewhere. (Is. vi. 13.) So also Zechariah charges here the Jews with stupidity; for though the

[1] "All the nations" are considered to be the heathen nations by *Michaelis*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*; but the meaning in this case is very obscure. Though the word here used, "peoples," or nations, commonly designates the Gentile world, yet there are instances in which it is applied to the tribes of Israel. See 1 Kings xxii. 28; Joel ii. 6. *Blayney* proposes to connect "all nations" with "cut asunder," and renders כֹּל, "before," "and cut it asunder, to break the covenant which I had made, before all the nations:" but intervening clauses of this kind are quite foreign to the character of the Hebrew language.—*Ed.*

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greater part saw all things in confusion, yet they did not consider, but regarded almost as nothing the dreadful judgment of God. It must then be that men are extremely refractory, when they perceive not that they are chastised by God; yet the Prophet charges the Jews with this sottishness; for they regarded not this as the word of Jehovah, they did not believe that this was God's hand. But he says further, that the *poor of the flock* perceived this: and thus he shows, that while the body of the people followed the way to ruin, a few derived benefit from God's scourges; and thus it never happens, that God chastises without some advantage. Though then the reprobate obstinately resist God, and hesitate not to tread under foot his judgments, and as far as they can, render them void, there are yet some few who receive benefit and acknowledge God's hand so as to humble themselves and repent.

The Prophet, then, after having complained that the chief men, even those who were in honour and in wealth among the Jews, heedlessly despised God's dreadful judgment, makes this addition, that there were a few very poor and humble men, who regarded this judgment as not having come by chance, but through God, who became a just avenger, because his favour had been wantonly despised: *The poor* then *of the flock knew this to be the word of Jehovah.*

As this happened in the time of the Prophet, it is no wonder that at this day, even when God thunders from heaven and makes known his judgments by manifest proofs, the world should yet rush headlong into perdition, and become as it were stupified in their calamities. In the meantime we ought to strive to connect ourselves with the miserable poor, who are deemed as the offscourings of the world, and so attentively to consider God's vengeance, that we may seriously fear and not provoke his extreme judgments, and thus perish with the wicked.

We must observe also the expression which Zechariah introduced before the last words, *Who attend to me.* He mentions it as a singular and a rare thing, that even a few deigned to consider the works of God. The chief wisdom of men, we know, is attentively to consider the hand of God;

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but almost all seem to be immersed in a state of stupor: when the Lord smites them, they stand as it were amazed, and never, as we have already said, regard the hand of the smiter; and when the Lord freely and kindly cherishes them, they exult in their own wantonness. Thus under every kind of treatment, they are untractable; for they attend not to God, but close their eyes, harden their hearts, and cover themselves with many veils; in short, we find the blindness of the world ever connected with perverseness, so that they in vain pretend ignorance, for they *attend* not to God, but on the contrary turn their backs on him and darken the clear light by their wickedness.

We now then see why this sentence is introduced, that the *poor of the flock* understand, because they apply their minds and devote their attention for the purpose of considering the works of God. It hence follows that the bulls, who with their horns fearlessly assail God, and that he-goats, who by their stench fill the air, continue in their brutishness, and derive no benefit from God's judgments, because they are wilfully and through their own wickedness wholly blind. It follows—

12. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver.

13. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

12. Et dixi illis, Si bonum est in oculis vestris (*hoc est*, si vobis placet,) date mercedem meam; quòd si non, desistite: et appenderunt mercedem meam triginta argenteos.

13. Et dixit Iehova ad me, Projice hoc ad figulum, magnificentiam pretii quo æstimatus sum ab illis: et sumpsi triginta argenteos, et projeci hoc ad templum Iehovæ, ad figulum.

God now adds another crime, by which he discovers the wickedness of the people; for they estimated all the labour he had bestowed at a very insignificant price. He had before complained of ingratitude; but more fully detected was the iniquity and baseness of the people, when they thus regarded as of no value the inestimable favour of God towards them. What the Prophet then says now is—that God at last tried them so as to know whether his benefits were

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of any account among the Jews, and that it had been fully found out, that all the labour and toil employed in their behalf, had been ill-spent and wholly lost. That Zechariah now speaks in his own person, and then introduces God as the speaker, makes no difference, as we said yesterday, as to the main subject; for his object is to set forth how shamefully the Jews had abused the favour of God, and how unjustly they had despised it. And yet he speaks as God's minister; for God not only governed that people himself, but also endued with the power of his Spirit many ministers, who undertook the office of shepherds.

He then says, that he came (and what is said properly belongs to God) to the people and demanded a reward, *Give me*, he says, *a reward; if not, forbear.*[1] He expresses here the highest indignation, as though one upbraided the wickedness and ingratitude of his neighbour and said, "Own my kindness, if you please; if not, let it perish: I care not; I see that you are wholly worthless and altogether unworthy of being so liberally treated: I therefore make no account of thy compensations; but at the same time it behoves thee to consider how much thou art indebted to me." So now does God in high displeasure speak here: "*Give* me at least *a reward*, that I may not have served you for nothing: you have misused my labour, I have borne with many wrongs and annoyances in ruling you; what is to be the compensation for my solicitude and care? I indeed make no account of a reward, for I am not a mercenary." He then adds, that they *gave him thirty silverings.*[2] He mentions this no doubt as a mean price, intimating, that they wished by such a small sum to compensate for the many and inestimable favours of God; as when one hires a swineherd or a clown, he gives a paltry sum as his wages; so the Jews, as the Prophet says, acted towards God. At the same time by the mean price, a suitable reward only to a clown, he means those frivolous things by which the Jews thought to satisfy God:

[1] *Drusius* gives the sense, "Nihil date—give nothing;" and *Jerome*, "Aperte renuite—openly refuse."—*Ed.*

[2] "Rate my labours as a true shepherd. And they rated it contemptuously; thirty pieces of silver being the price of a slave. Ex. xxi. 32." —*Newcome.*

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for we know how diligent they were in performing their ceremonies, as though indeed these were a compensation that was of any value with God! He requires integrity of heart, and he gives himself to us, that he may in return have us as his own.[1] This then was the price of labour which the Lord had deserved. It would have been a suitable reward had the Jews devoted themselves wholly to him in obedience to his word. But what did they do? They sedulously performed ceremonies and other frivolous things. This then was a sordid reward, as though they sought to put him off with the reward of a swineherd.

Hence he adds, *Jehovah said to me, throw it to the potter.* "This truly is my reward! Cast it to the potter, that he may get some bricks or coverings to repair the temple; if there are any parts of the temple dilapidated, let the potter get thereby some bricks, or let any humble artizan have such a price for himself." But he afterwards speaks ironically when he says, *the magnificence* and the glory of *the price at which he had been estimated!* "This is, forsooth! the magnificence of my price, though I had endured many toils! they now deal with me as with some mean swineherd, though I was their Lord and Shepherd: since then they seek thus craftily to satisfy me, and reproachfully offer me a paltry reward, and as it were degrade my glory and spit in my face, Cast, *cast it,* he says, *to the potter;*" that is, let them repair the temple, in which they delight so much as if they were in heaven: for the temple is their idol; but God will be never nigh them while they act thus hypocritically with him. "Let them then repair the breaches of the temple and pay the price to the potter; for I will not suffer a price so unworthy of my majesty to be obtruded so disgracefully on me."

We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet: and first we must bear in mind what I have stated, that here is described how irreclaimable had been the wickedness of the people: though rejected by God, when he had broken his

[1] So *Grotius* says, "Vilis hæc merces significat victimas et ritus sine pietate solida,—This mean reward signifies victims and ceremonies without real piety."—*Ed.*

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rod, they yet esteemed as nothing the favours which they had experienced. How so? because they thought that they performed an abundant service to God, when they worshipped him by external frivolities; for ceremonies without a real sense of religion are frivolous puerilities in God's presence. What then the Prophet now urges is, that the Jews wilfully buried God's benefits, by which he had nevertheless so bound them to himself that they could not be released. And to the same purpose is what follows, *Cast it to the potter:* for he testifies that the price was of no value, nay, that he abominated such a reward as men paid him when they dealt with him in such a reproachful manner; for as he says in Isaiah, it was a weariness to him—"I am disgusted with your festal days; why do you daily tread the pavement of my temple?" (Is. i. 12, 13;) and again he says, "He who slays an ox is the same as he who kills a man." (Is. lxvi. 3.) God in these places shows, as here by Zechariah, that these sacrifices which ungodly men and hypocrites offer to him, without a right feeling of religion, are the greatest abominations to him,—why? Because it is the highest indignity which the wicked can offer, which is as it were to spit in his face, when they compare him to a potter or a swineherd, and think nothing of the reward which he deserves, and that is, to consecrate and really to devote themselves wholly to him without any dissimulation. When therefore men trifle with God and think that he is delighted with frivolous puerilities, they compare him, as I have said, to a swineherd, or to some low or common workman; and this is an indignity which he cannot bear, and for which he manifests here by his Prophet his high displeasure.[1]

[1] These two verses are quoted in Matt. xxvii. 9, 10. On this subject see the Translator's Preface prefixed to this Volume. *Blayney* needlessly labours to reconcile the wording of the two passages. The quotation is clearly, like many others, one of accommodation, or of likeness. The "price" here is evidently that for labour; but the "price" in Matthew is for blood. There is a similarity, and not identity, in the two cases: and the general meaning, and not the words, are to be regarded. For "Prophesies," as *Marckius* observes, are often quoted in the New Testament, not according to the expressions, κατὰ τὸ ῥητὸν, but according to the sense or meaning, κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν, accompanied with some illustration of the meaning derived from the event."—*Ed.*

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou ceasest not, though provoked by our many sins, to discharge the office of a good and most faithful Shepherd, and as thou continuest in various ways to testify that Christ watches over us as one who has undertaken the care of our safety,—O grant, that we may be touched with the feeling of true repentance, and so profit under thy scourges, that by considering thy judgments, we may be really humbled under thy mighty hand, and so submit to thee, that finding us teachable and obedient, thou mayest continue to rule us to the end, until after having been protected from all harms by the pastoral staff of thine only-begotten Son, we shall at length reach that blessed rest, which has been procured for us by his blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-ninth.

14. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, *even* Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

14. Et fregi virgam meam alteram, nempe collectionis, ad dissipandam fraternitatem inter Iehudah et inter Israel.

THERE is here set before us the extreme vengeance of God in scattering his people, so that there would be no longer any union between the children of Abraham. We have seen that the Prophet took two staves or crooks to execute the office of a shepherd in ruling the people. The first staff he said was Beauty, because God had omitted nothing necessary to produce the best order of things. Now when this blessed mode of ruling was trodden under foot, then soon after followed the scattering of the people: and this is the reason why the Prophet says, that he broke the other rod, or his crook. We then see that this people by their ingratitude at length justly deserved to be left without any regular form of government, and also without any union.

As to the word חבלים *chebelim*, we have before said that what the Rabbins teach us, that it means "destroyers," does not comport with the passage. But why should Zechariah say here that the rod was broken, that there should be no more union or fraternity between the kingdom of Judah and the ten tribes? We have already said, that this word by changing the points may have the meaning which has

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been mentioned; for חבל, *chebel*, signifies a rope or binding. We must also bear in mind, that this is an instance of "last first" (ὕστερον πρότερον;) for he told us before that God, bidding adieu to the people, demanded his reward; this then ought to have been first mentioned: but this inversion of order is common in Hebrew. This verse then we are to read, as though it was placed before the last mission, by which God laid aside the office of a shepherd.[1]

I will come now to the passage in Matthew; for after having told us that the thirty pieces of silver were cast away by Judas, and that by them the Potter's Field was bought, he adds, that this prediction of the Prophet was fulfilled. He does not indeed repeat the same words, but it is quite clear, that this passage was quoted, "They gave," he says, "the thirty silverings, the price of the valued, whom they of the children of Israel have valued." (Matt. xxvii. 9.) In substance then there is no doubt an agreement between the words of Matthew and those of the Prophet. But we must hold this principle,—that Christ was the true Jehovah from the beginning. As then the Son of God is the same in essence with the Father, and is with him the only true God, it is no wonder that what the Prophet figuratively expressed as having been done under the law by the ancient people, has been done to him literally in his own person: for as they had given to God thirty pieces of silver, a sordid price, as his just reward, so he complained that the labour he undertook in ruling them, was unjustly valued; and when

[1] There seems to be no necessity for this. The order is consistent as it is. The breaking of the first rod was the relinquishing of the ruling office; and the breaking of the second, which happened after the contemptuous price or reward had been offered, was the sending of an awful judgment—universal discord, instead of the union before preserved. The breaking of the brotherhood between Judah and Israel has been variously understood. *Grotius* and *Newcome* refer to past history, the separation of the ten tribes from that of Judah; but this cannot be understood here. *Marckius*, *Henry*, *Scott* and *Henderson* agree in the main with *Calvin*, and consider that the internal discords are meant which prevailed among the Jews, who became united after their return from Babylon under one government, though many of them were descendants of the ten tribes. "When the staff of beauty," says Henry, "is broken, the staff of bands will not hold long. An unchurched people will be soon an undone people."—*Ed.*

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Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver, it was a visible specimen of this prophecy exhibited in his own person.

When Matthew says, that Christ was valued by the children of Israel, he charges the chosen people with impiety. The article *οἱ*, is to be here understood. The expression is indeed, *ἀπὸ υἱων Ισραὴλ;* but the sentence is to be taken in this sense,—that he was valued at so low a price, not by barbarous nations, but by the very people who were of the children of Israel and of the seed of Abraham, as though he had said, "This wrong has been offered to God, not by strangers, but by a people whom he had chosen and adopted as his peculiar possession; and this wickedness is therefore less excusable."

Then Matthew adds, "They gave it for the Potter's Field, as the Lord had commanded me." This part also well agrees with the prophecy. It is indeed certain that this money was not designedly given to buy a field, that the Jews might obey God; but we know that God executes his purposes by means of the wicked, though they neither think nor wish to do such a thing. But what does Zechariah say? *Cast it*, he says, *to the potter;* he does not say "To the field of the potter." But we have explained for what purpose God commanded the thirty silverings to be cast to the potter; it was, that he might get bricks or tiles to repair the temple; and this was said in contempt, or by way of ridicule. Such also was the visible symbol of this as to the purchase of the field; for the potter, the seller of the field, knew not what he was doing; the Scribes and Pharisees thought nothing of fulfilling what had been predicted. But that it might be made evident that Christ was the true God who had from the beginning spoken by the Prophet, God, by setting the thing before their eyes, intended that there should be a visible fact or transaction, that he might as it were draw the attention of the Jews to what is here said. The Prophet proceeds,—

15. And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.	15. Et dixit Iehova mihi, Adhuc sume tibi vas pastoris stulti.[1]

[1] Rendered "ἄπειρος, inexperienced," by *Sept.*, "ἄφρονος, unwise," by *Aq.*,

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16. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

16. Quia ecce ego constituo pastorem in terra; quod excisum est non visitabit, quod juvenile est non requiret, quod confractum est non sanabit, quod stat non pascet; et carnem pinguis comedet, et ungulas eorum confringet.

Here the Prophet teaches us, that when God shall renounce the care of his people there will be some weak form of government; but it is evident that God would no longer perform the office of a shepherd; as though he had said, that the people would be so deserted, that they would yet think themselves to be still under the protection of God, as we see to be the case among the Papists, who proudly make a boasting of this kind—"The Church is never forsaken by God." Though the truth of God has been long ago completely buried, they yet hold that it is still the true Church, a Church filled with impious superstitions! As then the Papists glory in the title only, and are content with it, so the Jews, we know, boasted of their privileges; and these were their weapons when they sought to oppose and contend with the Apostles—"What! are not we the heritage of God? has he not promised that his sanctuary would be perpetual among us? is not the sacerdotal unction a sure and infallible proof of his favour?" As then the Jews made use of these foolish boastings against the Apostles, so also at this day the Papists hide all infamy under the title of Church. The same thing Zechariah here means by saying that he by God's command *took the instrument of a foolish shepherd.*[1]

Sym., and *Theod.*, and "stupid," or "stolid," by the *Targum*. The word means gross, stupid, foolish; but as *Henderson* justly observes, foolish often means wicked in Scripture; and what is said of this shepherd proves that his folly was his wickedness. *Dathius* renders it "mali, evil," or wicked. —*Ed.*

[1] This part determines the character of the whole vision; for the whole chapter is a vision, the first part being a denunciation of judgment executed in the final overthrow of the nation, and the remainder, from verse 4th to the end, being a *symbolical* vision, representing the dealings of God with the Jews in the interval, from the time referred to in the last chapter to the coming of the Messiah, or to the destruction of the Jewish polity by the Romans. *Henderson* seems disposed to regard Herod as "the foolish shepherd;" in that case the vision extends only to the advent of Christ; but if we regard this shepherd, as *Blayney* does, as denoting a succession

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The word כְּלִי, *cali*, means in Hebrew any kind of instrument. Some regard it to be a bag with holes, but this is an unsuitable interpretation. By instrument, Zechariah, I have no doubt, means the implements of a shepherd, by which he proves himself to be in that office. But he calls him at the same time a *foolish shepherd*, that we may know that he was a shepherd only in disguise. The term shepherd is given here by way of concession, according to the usual manner of Scripture; and we also at this day concede sometimes the name of Church to the Papists; and we farther concede the name of pastors to their mitred bishops, but improperly. So also does Zechariah in this place; though he speaks of a shadow and thing of nought, yet he says that there would be shepherds in Judea; and he adds the reason—Because God would thus punish that wicked and ungrateful people: *Behold*, he says, *I will set a shepherd in the land.* God had now, as we have said, renounced the office of a shepherd; but he afterwards set over them wolves, and thieves, and robbers, instead of shepherds, that is, when he executed his dreadful judgment on the Jews: and he shows at the same time what sort of shepherds they would be who in future should possess power over them.

of tyrannical rulers, then the vision extends to the very overthrow predicted in the three first verses of the chapter.

This view, which is that of *Calvin*, removes all difficulties, and affords a proof of the falsity of the opinion advanced by *Mede*—that this portion of Zechariah belongs to Jeremiah. That the Prophet personates God here, or the Messiah, as the ruler of the Jewish nation, previous to his appearance in the flesh, is evident from the fact that God identifies, as it were, himself with the Prophet. (ver. 8 and 10.) God's dealings with the Jews are symbolized in this vision in a way similar to what is done, as to the history of the Church, in the visions granted to John; the sticks, the breaking of them, the cutting off of three shepherds, the price or reward, and the foolish shepherd, are symbolical, setting forth the various dealings of God with the people, and their conduct towards him. As to the price, the very symbol was afterwards strikingly exemplified in the history of the Messiah. The Prophet is made to represent God in his two characters—as a beneficent ruler, producing order and unity, and as a judicial ruler, employing wicked and cruel tyrants to punish a refractory and rebellious people.

"God commanded him (the Prophet) to perform a real action, and in a waking state, which action was to be an intimation and a sign of that which was to happen in God's dealings with Israel." *Abarbanel*, quoted by *M'Caul*, in his translation of *Kimchi* on Zechariah.

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They were to be such as would *not look after what had been cut off*. Some consider the word הַנִּכְחָדוֹת, *enecachedut*, as signifying the sick sheep; but they are in my judgment mistaken; for careful shepherds seek what is lost, or what has disappeared from the flock; and this is what Zechariah means, for he says, *he will not visit*, that is, he will look after what has been cut off from the flock. Then he says, *he will not seek* הַנַּעַר, *enor*, the young. Some explain this of fat lambs; but others more correctly of those which are tender, not as yet accustomed to follow the shepherd; for sheep by long use keep from going astray, but lambs are more apt to wander from the flock, and are easily scattered here and there. This is the reason why Zechariah makes it one of the duties of a good shepherd to *seek what is yet young*. He adds in the third place, the sick, *What is wounded*, he says, *he will not heal:* and lastly, *he will not feed what stands*, that is, what is sound. The word literally is, to stand; but it means full vigour or strength. What then is vigorous and sound he will not feed. He then says, *The flesh of the fat he will devour, yea, he will break their hoofs*. By these words he amplifies the cruelty of the shepherd; for he will not be satisfied with the fat flesh, without breaking also the bones and the hoofs, as though his barbarity would exceed that of wolves and wild beasts.

We now then see the import of this prophecy: and it seems to have been added, that the Jews might not flatter themselves with an external and evanescent form of government, after having departed from God, and after the covenant which he had made with that nation, having been also renounced by him, so that he should be no longer their Father, or Guardian, or Shepherd. Hypocrites, we know, do not easily put off their obstinacy; though God's vengeance should be manifest, yet we see how they harden themselves, especially when they can cover their wickedness under some false pretence, a striking example of which we observe among the Papists. We now then perceive the design of the Holy Spirit, when the Prophet is bid to assume the character, and take the implements, of a foolish shepherd.

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If any one objects, and says that this was not suitable to a true Prophet of God, the answer is plain—the Prophet deviated not from the right course of his calling, though he assumed the character of a foolish shepherd, an instance of which we have already seen in Hosea, who was commanded to take a harlot, and to beget spurious children from one who had been infamous in her character. (Hosea i. 2.) As this was a vision presented to Hosea, it does not follow that he did anything disgraceful, so as to prevent him from exercising the office of a holy teacher. So also now, God simply shows to us what would be the future condition of that reprobate people.

It must further be noticed, that when anything of a right and good government remains in the external form, there is no reason to conclude from this that God is the ruler, for, as we have already said, it is a ridiculous and senseless glorying when men are inflated and take pride in mere titles or names of distinction. Let us then take heed, that those who bear rule be rightly called by God, and let them afterwards discharge their office faithfully, otherwise they may be a hundred times called pastors, after having attained this degree of honour, and be after all no better than wolves and robbers; for no one is a true pastor whom the Lord does not rule by his Spirit, and who is not his minister, and no ungodly pastors, however they may assume the title, can be called the ministers of God, when he has already, as we see here, forsaken the people.

It must at the same time be observed, that it happens not except through the just judgment of God, that things grow worse and worse, and at length become wholly degenerated; and those who loudly boast and seek to be esteemed by all as pastors, are altogether senseless, for God has not appointed them, and the whole filth of the Papal clergy is at this day a manifest evidence of God's wrath and indignation, for he thus justly punishes the contempt of his word, and that perverseness by which the world thus awfully provoked him. Though God has been graciously calling the whole world to himself, we yet see how his favour has been rejected, and we also see how almost all have gone on in their obstinacy.

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God had indeed in his great goodness borne for some ages with this great wickedness, and when he began to punish the ungrateful, he did not break out to extreme vengeance, for he added to scourges heavier scourges, but at length he was constrained to make his wrath to flow like a deluge. Hence has arisen that dreadful confusion which is seen under the Papacy; and this is what the words of the Prophet mean when God declares here that foolish pastors would be set up by his command and through his power, as he would thus execute his judgment on the ungodly.

Now as the Prophet enumerates here those things which are inconsistent with the duty of a good shepherd, we may hence learn, on the other hand, what it is to rule the Church rightly and according to God's will, and also what are the attributes or marks of a good pastor. Whosoever then would be owned as a good pastor in the Church, must visit those who have been cut off, seek the young, strive to heal the wounded, and feed well the sound and the vigorous; and he must also abstain from every kind of cruelty, and he must not be given to the indulgence of his appetite, nor regard gain, nor exercise any tyranny. Whosoever will thus conduct himself, will prove that he is really a true pastor. But what can be more preposterous than for those to be called pastors who have no flock under their care? who plunder, and gather, and accumulate what they afterward spend in dissipation?

As then it is quite evident, that all those under the Papacy who are called bishops, seek the office for no other end but that they may live sumptuously, without any care or labour, and indulge in pleasures, and also spend in the gratification of their lust what is unjustly got,—as then they are known to be idlers and cruel tyrants, such as the Prophet here describes, do we not clearly see how childishly they boast of their hierarchy, and at the same time declare that they derive their origin from the Apostles? For what sort of successor to Peter or to Paul, is he who exercises the most barbarous tyranny, and who thinks himself not bound to take care of the flock? We then see that there is at this day under the Papacy a striking representation of what the Prophet says here; there is a certain form of government,

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but God is wholly separated from such a mask or phantom. But we must also bear in mind, that the world suffers merited punishment on account of its ingratitude, when it is thus cruelly and shamefully treated; for it is but just that they who will not bear the easy yoke of Christ, should be made subject to the power of the Devil, and be trodden under foot and disgracefully oppressed by tyrants. This is God's righteous judgment. The Church, we know, would not have been turned upside down had not the greater part rejected the doctrine of salvation, and shaken off all religion; hence God is in a manner constrained by so great and by such unbridled wantonness to renounce his office of a shepherd. It then follows—

17. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

17. Heus pastor inutilis! deserens gregem! gladius super brachium ejus, et super oculum dextrum ejus; brachium ejus arescendo arescet, et oculus dexter ejus contrahendo contrahetur, (*alii*, obscurando obscurabitur.)

In this verse the Prophet teaches us, that though God would inflict a deserved punishment on the Jews, yet the shepherds themselves would not escape his vengeance; and thus he reminds them, that even in such a confused and depressed state of things, he would still in some degree remember his covenant. He addresses the Shepherds themselves, for he speaks not of one, but of the whole number, as it has already been stated.

Woe to the useless shepherd, he says; the word אליל, *alil*, means in Hebrew a thing of nought, and hence idols were called אלילים, *alilim*, nothings; "Those useless shepherds,"[1] he says, "who forsake the flock." He again shows by an explicit term, that those whom he called shepherds were not worthy of so honourable a title. He then only concedes the name, for a shepherd who is not solicitous for the safety of

[1] "Worthless shepherd," is the version of *Newcome*, and *Henderson*, and also of *Drusius*, *Bochart*, *Piscator*, and *Marckius*. Our version follows *Jerome*, who renders it "idolum—idol." *Parkhurst* considers it in the sense of nought, nothing, vain, nothing-worth, and refers to Job xiii. 4, and Jer. xiv. 14.—*Ed.*

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his flock, clearly proves that he is really no shepherd. He then denounces on him a punishment, *A sword*, he says, *on his right arm and on his right eye!* By the sword he means any kind of punishment, by the arm is to be understood strength, and by the eye prudence. He means, "God will punish thee both in soul and body, for his curse shall be on thy strength and on thine understanding." Hence he says, *Dry up shall his arm.* This seems not indeed to correspond with the metaphor of the sword, but it matters not, for the Prophet, as we have said, includes under that word every kind of punishment. *Dry up* then *shall his arm*, that is, all its vigour shall cease, so as to become like a piece of decayed wood; and *his right eye*, the soundness of his mind or his right understanding, *shall by contracting be contracted;* some read, shall be darkened; but the verb properly signifies, to wrinkle, as it appears from other places, and I can find no better way of expressing its meaning than by saying that the eye would be contracted.[1]

I have briefly explained the object of the Prophet, even that God would so punish the wickedness of the people, as not to allow those shepherds to escape whom he would employ as instruments in executing his vengeance. For though they were under the direction of divine power, we must yet hold this principle, that they had nothing in common with God; for mere ambition, avarice, and cruelty instigated them; and nothing was farther from their purpose than to obey God: but he extorted service from the unwilling and even the ignorant—for what end? that he might render to the ungrateful, the wicked, and the perverse, in

[1] To render the metaphor consistent, *Dathius* has rendered חרב, not sword, but drought or dryness, which it sometimes means. Then the verse would be—

17. Woe to the worthless shepherd,
Who forsakes the flock!
A drought shall be on his arm,
And on the eye of his right hand: (*i. e.* on his right eye:)
His arm, withering it shall wither;
And his right eye, shrinking it shall shrink.

Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* render the last line as in our version; but restraint, or contraction, or shrinking is the idea included in the verb. When there are no humours sufficient for the eye, it contracts, it shrinks, and this corresponds with the drought.—*Ed.*

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their own sinful ways, the reward which they deserved. We then see that the design of God's vengeance is just; and we also see that the instruments he employs are ungodly: there is therefore no reason for them to think that they shall be unpunished, because they accomplish God's purpose, for they do not intend any such thing.

We must also bear in mind, that when the extreme rigour of God prevails, there still remains some evidence of his favour, for some seed, though few in number, is still perpetuated; for the Church is never so completely abolished as not to leave any remnants, for whose safety God is pleased to provide when he executes his vengeance, inasmuch as he stretches forth his hand at the same time against the ministers he has employed, because they had cruelly abused their power. So also at this day the mitred bishops shall be made to know how precious to God is the safety of his Church; for though almost all the people and almost every individual are worthy of the most tyrannical cruelty, yet we know that some are found in that labyrinth for whom God has a care. Though then they who at this day possess power under the Papacy think themselves innocent, while they are robbers and wolves, they shall yet find that God is a righteous judge, who will visit their abominable cruelty: for the disorder of the Church is not its destruction, as God ever preserves some remnant.

We also see that the whole strength of men depends on the grace of God; and farther, that a sound mind proceeds from his Spirit: for since it is he who takes away from men both their strength and a right judgment, we hence conclude that to give these things is also in his power. Let men then know that in order to possess due courage and strength, they are to rely on the hidden power of God; and let them also know that in order to discern what is useful and profitable, they must be governed by his Spirit; and let those especially who bear rule be assured of this, that when they exercise power in peace, it is God's singular gift, and that when they rightly govern their subjects, and are endued with sound discretion, it is wholly to be ascribed to an influence from above.

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But it may be asked, How can this harmonize—that those who were before useless are deprived of understanding and strength? To this I answer—that it is the same as though the Prophet had said, that the baseness of him who was previously an useless shepherd would be made conspicuous to all. For however deficient they might have been in their office, they yet for a time deceived the simple multitude; nay, we see at this day how the mitred bishops and abbots and their whole company by their delusive splendour, dazzle the eyes of most men: they believe that the Pope is the vicar of God, and the rest the successors of the apostles! But the Prophet here testifies, that when the ripened time shall come, their shameful conduct shall be made evident, so that all shall treat them with contempt, and that they shall become an abomination to all. Though then they may be counted wise and held in admiration, or at least in honour, yet Zechariah threatens them with the loss of both; for God's curse lies on them, on their arms, and on their right eyes. This is the import of the passage. I shall begin the next chapter to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast hitherto so patiently endured, not only our sloth and folly, but also our ingratitude and perverseness,—O grant, that we may hereafter render ourselves submissive and obedient to thee; and as thou hast been pleased to set over us the best of shepherds, even thine only-begotten Son, cause us willingly to attend to him, and to suffer ourselves to be gently ruled by him; and though thou mayest find in us what may justly provoke thy wrath, yet restrain extreme severity, and so correct what is sinful in us, as to continue to the end our Shepherd, until we shall at length, under thy guidance, reach thy heavenly kingdom; and thus do thou keep us in thy fold and under the guidance of thy pastoral staff, that at length being separated from the goats, we may enjoy that blessed inheritance which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy beloved Son. —Amen.

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CHAPTER XII.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixtieth.

1. The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

1. Onus verbi Iehovæ super Israel: Dicit Iehova, qui expandit cœlos, et fundavit terram, et formavit spiritum hominis in medio ejus.

The inscription seems not to agree with what follows, for he does not denounce any evil on the chosen people in this chapter, but, on the contrary, comforts the miserable, and promises that God would provide for the safety of his Church. Since then Zechariah speaks only of God's favour and aid, he seems to have mentioned *burden* here improperly or unreasonably; for משא, *mesha*, we know, is rightly to be taken for a threatening prophecy. It might indeed be said, that he promises that God would so deliver his Church as to teach it at the same time that it would be subject to many evils and trials: but I rather think that the Prophet's design was different, even to show that the Israelites, who had preferred exile to God's favour, would be punished for their sloth and ingratitude, because it was through their own fault that they were not again united in one body, and that they did not rightly worship God in their own country. Interpreters have heedlessly passed over this, as though it had nothing to do with the subject: but except this be borne in mind, what is read in this chapter will be altogether without meaning. I therefore consider that the Prophet here reproves those Israelites who had rejected what they had long desired, when it was offered to them from above and beyond all hope: for nothing was so much wished for by them as a free return to their own country; and we also see how ardently all the Prophets had prayed for restoration. As then the Israelites, given to ease, and pleasures, and their worldly advantages, had counted as nothing the permission given them to return, that they might again be gathered under God's protection, it was a base in-

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gratitude. Hence the Prophet here reproves them, and shows that their success would be far otherwise than they imagined.

We must also observe, that those who were dispersed in different parts, were retained by their torpidity, because they did not think that the state of the people would continue; for they saw, as they had before found, that Judea was surrounded by inveterate enemies, and also that they would not be a people sufficiently strong to repel the assaults of those around them; for they had already been accustomed to bear all things, and though they might have had some courage, they had completely lost it, having been oppressed by so long a servitude. Since then the ten tribes entertained these ideas, they did not avail themselves of the present kindness of God. Thus it was, that they wholly alienated themselves from the Church of God, and renounced as it were of their own accord that covenant, on which was founded the hope of eternal salvation.[1]

What then does Zechariah teach us in this chapter? Even that God would be the guardian of Jerusalem, to defend it against all violence, and that though it might be surrounded by nations for the purpose of assailing it, he would not yet suffer it to be overcome: and we shall see that many other things are stated here; but it is enough to touch now on the main point, that God would not forsake that small company and the weak and feeble remnant; and that however inferior the Jews might be to their enemies, yet the power of God alone would be sufficient to defend and keep them.

If it be then now asked, why the Prophet calls the word he received a *burden on Israel?* The answer is plainly this, that the Israelites were now as it were rotting among foreign nations without any hope of deliverance, having refused to be gathered under God's protection, though he had kindly

[1] Many of the Jews at this time were not returned. There were especially two returns—the first under Zerubbabel in the year before Christ 536; the second under Ezra in the year 457, seventy-nine years after the first. Now the date of this prophecy in our Bibles is 587, fifty-one years after the first return, and twenty-eight years before the second. Nehemiah, through whose influence the walls of Jerusalem were built and a great reform produced, returned about eleven years after Ezra.—*Ed.*

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and graciously invited them all to return. Since then God had effected nothing by stretching forth his hands, being ready to embrace them again, this was the reason for the *burden* of which Zechariah speaks; for they would be touched with grief and with envy when they saw their brethren protected by God's aid, and that they themselves were without any hope of deliverance. In short, there is an implied contrast between the ten tribes and the house of Judah; and this is evident from the context. Having now ascertained the Prophet's design, we shall proceed to the words.

The burden, he says, *of the word of Jehovah on Israel: Say does Jehovah who expanded the heavens*, &c. Zechariah thus exalts God in order to confirm the authority of this prophecy; for no doubt the creation of heaven and earth and of man is here mentioned on account of what is here announced. We have elsewhere seen similar declarations; for when anything is said difficult to be believed, what is promised will have no effect on us, except the infinite power of God be brought to our minds. God then, that he may gain credit to his promises, bids us to raise up our eyes to the heavens and carefully to consider his wonderful workmanship, and also to turn our eyes down to the earth, where also his ineffable power is apparent; and, in the third place, he calls our attention to the consideration of our own nature. Since then what Zechariah says could hardly be believed, he prescribes to the Jews the best remedy—they were to raise upwards their eyes, and then to turn them to the earth. The expanse of the heavens constrains us to admire him; for however stupid we may be, we cannot look on the sun, and the moon and stars, and on the whole bright expanse above, without some and even strong emotions of fear and of reverence. Since then God exceeds all that men can comprehend in the very creation of the world, what should hinder us from believing even that which seems to us in no way probable? for it is not meet for us to measure God's works by what we can understand, for we cannot comprehend, no, not even the hundredth part of them, however attentively we may apply all the powers of our minds.

Nor is it yet a small matter when he adds, that God had

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formed the spirit of man; for we know that we live; the body of itself would be without any strength or motion, were it not endued with life; and the soul which animates the body is invisible. Since then experience proves to us the power of God, which is not yet seen by our eyes, why should we not expect what he promises, though the event may appear incredible to us, and exceed all that we can comprehend? We now then understand why the Prophet declares, that God *expanded the heavens, and founded the earth, and formed the spirit of man.*[1] By saying *in the midst of him*, he means, that the spirit dwells within; for the body, we know, is as it were its tabernacle. Let us proceed—

2. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

2. Ecce ego pono Ierusalem postem contritionis (*vel*, calicem veneni, *aut*, mortiferum; *alii vertunt*, crapulæ) omnibus populis per circuitum; atque etiam super Iehudah, erit in obsidionem contra Ierusalem.

Zechariah begins here to teach us what I have briefly

[1] It is usual to render the verbs here in the present tense. They are participles in Hebrew, which may often be rendered in the past tense. *Dathius* and *Blayney* so render them, "stretched out—founded—formed." The verse then would be as follows—

The burden of the word of Jehovah on Israel,
Saith Jehovah, who expanded the heavens,
And founded the earth,
And formed the spirit of man within him.

Though *Marckius* objects to the view taken by *Calvin* of the first line, yet the literal rendering, as given above, will admit of no other. It is a "burden" on, עַל, Israel. It is true that "burden" may not always mean a judgment, but a weighty and important prediction; yet when followed by *on*, it can mean nothing else. See 1 Kings xiii. 29, and 2 Kings ix. 25. It means a judgment too when another word comes after it, as, "The burden of Babylon," Is. xiii. 1. It is therefore rendered here improperly "Prophecy" by *Newcome*, and "sentence" by *Henderson*. It is not indeed necessary to confine the word "Israel" to the ten tribes, for it is often used in a general sense, denoting the descendants of Israel generally, when the word "Judah" is not introduced. The persons referred to were, it may be, those who continued in exile, many of whom returned afterwards with Ezra, though I think they were the people of the land. We ought to remember that Zechariah prophesied between the two returns, and that though the temple was built at this time, yet Jerusalem was not protected by walls, and continued so till the time of Nehemiah, about 90 years after the first return.—*Ed.*

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explained, that Jerusalem would be under the protection of God, who would render it safe and secure against all enemies. But he uses here figurative terms, which make the point more evident. He says, that Jerusalem would be a *threshold of bruising*, or breaking. The word סַף, *saph*, means a threshold almost everywhere in Scripture. But some think that it means here a cup, and then they translate רֹעַל, *rol*, drunkenness, or fury. But as this word also means breaking, it is not unsuitable to say that Jerusalem is here called a threshold at which people stumble, so that he who comes against this threshold either breaks a bone or receives some other injury. At the same time the Prophet seems to express something more, that whosoever ascended to attack Jerusalem would meet with a stumblingblock, by which he might have his legs broken or bruised. The meaning then is, that access to Jerusalem would be closed up, so that enemies would not overcome it, though they reached the walls and the gates, for they would stumble, as it is said, at the threshold.

If the other rendering be approved, the sense would be suitable,—that all the ungodly, while devising schemes against God's Church, would be inebriated by their own counsels; yea, that their drink would be deadly to them: for the passions of men produce effects like drunkenness. When therefore the ungodly gather their forces against the Church, it is the same as though they were greedily swallowing down wine; for the drunken meet together to indulge in excesses. The meaning then would be,—that this immoderate drinking would be fatal to the nations. But I prefer the former view,—that though the gates of the holy city were open, or even an easy access were made through the walls, yet God would on every side be a defence, so that enemies would stumble, as we have said, at the very threshold and bruise themselves. And this promise was very necessary then, for Jerusalem was exposed to the assaults of all, as it could not have defended itself by moats or walls or mounds: but the Lord here promises that it would be *a threshold of bruising*.

He then adds, *Also against Judah*, or over Judah, *it shall*

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be during the siege against Jerusalem. The Prophet, as I think, extends the promise to the whole land, as though he had said, "Though the compass of Jerusalem should not contain all the inhabitants, yet they shall be everywhere safe; for God will take them under his protection." I wonder why some interpreters have omitted the preposition עַל, *ol*, and have translated thus, "Judah also shall be in the siege against Jerusalem:" and they elicit a meaning wholly different, even that some of the Jews themselves would become perfidious, who would not spare their brethren and friends, but become hostile to them, and unite their forces to those of heathen nations. But I consider the meaning to be the reverse of this,—that when Jerusalem shall be besieged, the Lord will put impediments everywhere, which will hinder and prevent the assaults of enemies. When God, he says, shall defend the holy city, even this very thing, (for I apply this phrase to God's protection,) even this very thing shall be through the whole land; as though he had said, "God will not only be the guardian of the city alone, but also of the whole of the holy land."[1] Now this must have sharply goaded the Israelites, seeing that they were excluded from

[1] This has been found a difficult verse. The former part, as given in our version, "I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling," &c., has been adopted by most, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, *Marckius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*, only some of them adopt "intoxication" instead of "trembling." The word סַף means both a threshold and a bowl or a cup. The *Septuagint* have taken the former sense, and the *Targum* the latter: but as רַעַל means shaking, trembling, confusion, occasioned by inebriety, it is more consistent to take the latter sense.

The latter part cannot certainly be construed according to our version, which is that of *Piscator*. *Newcome's* rendering is literal, and according to the sense given by *Jerome*, *Drusius*, *Castalio*, *Grotius*, and *Marckius*; and it is the following,—

And for Judah shall it (the cup) be,
In the siege against Jerusalem.

This implies that Judah would turn traitorous to Jerusalem. It is somewhat singular that many MSS. read "shall be" in the feminine gender, תִּהְיֶה, and סַף, when it means a cup or bowl, is of that gender. *Dathius* proposes another view. He takes מָצוֹר agreeably to the *Septuagint*, περιοχη, in the sense of a fortress, stronghold, or defence; and then the version would be,

And also with regard to Judah,
He will be for a defence to Jerusalem.

But the most natural and obvious meaning is the previous one.—*Ed.*

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having God's aid, inasmuch as they had not thought proper to return to their own country when liberty was freely given them. It follows—

3. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

3. Et erit in die illa, Ponam Ierusalem lapidem onerosum cunctis populis; quisque portabit concisione concidetur (*vel*, laceratione lacerabitur,) et congregabuntur contra eam omnes gentes terræ (*sic autem resolvi debet oratio*, Licet congregentur adversus eam cunctæ gentes terræ.)

Zechariah adds here another metaphor, which is very apposite; for when the ungodly made war against the holy city, the object was not to reduce it only to subjection, or to impose a tribute or a tax, or simply to rule over it,—what then? to cut it off entirely and obliterate its name. Since then such a cruelty would instigate enemies to assail the holy city, the Prophet here interposes and declares that it would be to them a most burdensome stone. He thus compares the enemies of Jerusalem to a man who attempts to take up a stone when he is too weak to do so. He then injures his own strength; for when a man tries to do what is too much for him, he loosens some of his joints, or breaks his sinews. The Prophet then means, that though many nations conspired against Jerusalem, and made every effort to overthrow it, they should yet at length find it to be a weight far too heavy for them: they should therefore break or lacerate their own arms, for their sinews would be broken by over-exertion.[1] Some explain the last clause more frigidly, "In tearing he will be torn," as when any one takes up a rough stone, he tears his own hands. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, meant to set forth something more serious;

[1] Literally it is,—

All her lifters, cut they shall be cut, *or*,
wounded they shall be wounded.

The whole verse is as follows,—

And it shall be in that day,
That I will make Jerusalem
A burdensome stone to all nations;
All her lifters, wounded they shall be wounded,
When gathered against her
Shall be all the people of the land.—*Ed.*

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and each clause would thus correspond much better; for as we have said, the object of the ungodly was to remove Jerusalem, so as not to leave a stone upon a stone: but God declares here that it would be too heavy a burden, so that they would find their own strength broken in attempting inconsiderately to remove what could not be transferred from its own place.

Now the reason for this prophecy is, because God was the founder of Jerusalem, as it is said, "Its foundations are in the holy mountains, love does the Lord the gates of Sion," (Ps. lxxxvii. 1, 2;) and again it is said, "Jehovah in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." (Ps. xlvi. 5.) We must also remember what we have observed in the last verse: for though the heavens are in continual motion, they yet retain their positions, and do not fall into disorder; but were the heavens and the earth blended together, still Jerusalem, founded by God's hand and exempt from the common lot of men, and whose condition was peculiar, would remain firm and unchangeable. We hence see why the Prophet says, that there would be no other issue to the ungodly, while attempting to overthrow Jerusalem, than to wound and tear themselves.

He then adds, *And assemble against them shall all nations.* This, as we have said, was added in order to show, that though enemies flocked together from every quarter, God would yet be superior to them. This clause then contains an amplification, to encourage the faithful to continue in their hope with invincible constancy, though they saw themselves surrounded by hosts of enemies. It afterwards follows—

4. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

4. Die illo, inquit Iehova, percutiam omnem equum stupore, et sessorem ejus amentia; et super domum Iehudah aperiam oculos meos, et omnem equum populorum percutiam cæcitate.

He pursues here the same subject, but in other words,—that multiplicity of means is in God's hand, by which he can drive away and break down the fury of enemies. By the

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words *horse and its rider*, the Prophet, stating a part for the whole, means whatever is strong, and intimates that it can be easily overcome by divine power.

He says first, *I will smite every horse with stupor*.[1] Military strength, we know, is in horses and horsemen; but he says that the horses would be stunned, and the horsemen seized as it were with madness, so that they would destroy themselves, and could do no harm to the Church. He then confirms what he said before—that though the whole world conspired against the Church, there would yet be sufficient power in God to repel and check all their assaults: and he mentions stupor, madness, and blindness, that the faithful might know that God can by hidden means either destroy or put to flight all their enemies. Though then God fights not with drawn swords, nor uses the common mode of warfare, yet the Prophet says, that he is prepared with other means to lay prostrate their enemies; for even the most powerful in the world cannot proceed so far as to confound their enemies by blindness and madness; but the Prophet here shows, that though no way appears to us by which God may deliver us, we are yet to entertain firm hope, for he can by his breath destroy all enemies, as he can render them blind, and take from them understanding, and wisdom, and strength.

Then he adds, *I will open mine eyes on the house of Judah*. A reason is here given why all enemies would be smitten with stupor and madness, because the Lord would have a regard for his Church; for to open the eyes means the same thing as to have a care for a thing. It had seemed good to God to neglect his people for a time, and this neglect was as it were an oblivion. Hence the saints often complain "How long wilt thou sleep! how long wilt thou close thine eyes! Look down, O Lord, and see." So in this place Zechariah means that God would yet care for his people, so as to subdue their enemies.

We may hence learn a useful doctrine—that, in the first

[1] "With astonishment," *Newcome*; "with consternation," *Henderson*; rather, "with stunness" or "stupefaction," a word more suitable to horses. —*Ed.*

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place, there is nothing better for us than to be gathered under the shadow of God's protection, however destitute of any fortress the Church may be, yea, were she to have innumerable enemies hostile to her, and to be without any strength to resist them. Though then the Church were thus grievously tried, and be in the midst of many dangers, and exposed even to death, let us learn from this passage that those are miserable indeed who through fear or cowardice separate themselves from her, and that they who call on God, and cast on him the care of their safety, shall be made blessed, though the whole world were mad against them, though the weapons of all nations were prepared for their ruin, and horses and horsemen were assembled to overwhelm them; for the defence of God is a sufficient protection to his Church. This is one thing. Then let us learn to exercise our faith, when God seems to cast us as it were between the teeth of wolves; for though he may not afford any visible aid, yet he knows how to deliver us, and possesses hidden means of help, which we may not perceive, because his purpose is to try our faith and our patience. And lastly, let us learn, that when God connives at our miseries, as though he had forgotten us, yet our hope, founded on him, can never be disappointed; for if we abide among his flock, he will at length open his eyes upon us, he will really show that he cares for our safety. It now follows—

5. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in the Lord of hosts their God.

5. Et dicent duces Iehudah in cordibus suis, Fortitudo mihi (*vel*, robur) habitatores Ierusalem in Iehova exercituum Deo suo.

He still continues the same subject—that however small and feeble the flock of God would be, it would yet have sufficient strength; for the Lord would stand on the side of those who fled to him. Though then Jerusalem was not as yet filled with citizens, and though there was but one city, yet Zechariah testifies that its strength would be invincible; but he speaks of the chiefs of Judah comparatively. Formerly, we know, it had a great number of men, and great armies were raised from that one tribe and the half tribe of

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Benjamin. Though then there were formerly many provinces, though the country was full of populous towns, yet almost Jerusalem alone had then begun to be inhabited: but the Prophet says here, that though the whole Church was gathered within the narrow bounds of one city, it would yet have sufficient strength to resist all the attacks of enemies.

Say then *shall the chiefs of Judah;* that is, though formerly the governors or commanders of thousands had forces in their several towns, yet now all would look to one city; for the land was nearly forsaken and without inhabitants; at the same time they were to entertain hope, for their strength was to be in the Lord. Some insert a conjunction, "Strength will be to me and to the citizens of Jerusalem;" but they pervert the meaning; for the Prophet meant to say in one sentence what I have stated—that the eyes of all would be directed to one city only, and that yet there would be sufficient ground for hope and confidence, for they would become strong, not in themselves, but in their God.

There is a change of number, when he says, a strength to me, for he had spoken of chiefs; it ought then to have been לנו, *lanu*, to us. But he now introduces each of them as speaking, as though he had said, "No one of the chiefs shall look to his own land, but, on the contrary, direct his eyes to the holy city, and be content with the defence of a few men." Hence he says, *In Jehovah of hosts, their God;* for he means that God would be then the protector of that people whom he had for a time forsaken. And he calls him again the Jehovah of hosts, in order to set forth his invincible power, lest the minds of the godly should fail through fear, on seeing themselves far unequal to their enemies.[1] It follows—

[1] There is something unsatisfactory in the usual rendering of this verse. The words "shall say in their heart," seem rather singular in this connection. There is one MS. which connects the preposition ל with "the inhabitants," and this reading is countenanced by the *Targum*. Then the version would be,—

And say will the chiefs of Judah in their heart,—
"Strength *be* to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
Through Jehovah of hosts, their God."

To say in the heart is to pray, to utter a secret prayer; and the prayer

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6. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, *even* in Jerusalem.

6. In die illa ponam duces Iehudah quasi fornacem (*vel*, catinum fusorium) ignis inter ligna, et quasi facem (*vel*, lampadem) ignis in manipulo (*hoc est*, inter manipulos;) et comedent ad dextram et ad sinistram cunctos populos in circuitu; et habitabitur (*vel*, manebit) Ierusalem adhuc sub se (*hoc est*, in loco suo) in Ierusalem.

He adds another metaphor for the sake of a further confirmation; for he says, that the chiefs of Judah would be like a melting pot: some render it a hearth, but improperly and without meaning. He afterwards compares them to a *flaming torch*, and heathen nations to wood and stubble or chaff. The Spirit speaks thus also in other places; and the reason is to be noticed; for when the ungodly assail the Church of God, all things seem to threaten its ruin; but God declares that they shall be like chaff or wood. "The house of Israel," says Isaiah, "shall be a flaming fire, and shall consume all the wood of the forest:" so also in this place, "There shall be indeed a great host of enemies, assembled against Israel; but the Lord will consume them, for he will be like fire in the midst of his people, and his people also shall be through the secret power of the Spirit like a burning pot or a torch, which shall consume the chaff, in which there is nothing substantial."

But the Prophet shows again that the deliverance of the Church is ever wonderful: and hence foolishly do they act who rely on human and earthly instrumentality, and wilfully bind God to their own ways; for whenever God promises to be their deliverer, their inquiry is, "But how can this be? whence will come this aid to us? how will the hand of the Lord be stretched forth to us? whence will he gather his army?" Inasmuch then as we are wont thus anxiously to inquire, and thus drive away from us the aid of God, let this truth, taught by the Prophet, be borne in mind,—that though enemies in great numbers may come upon us, they

is stated in the following lines. This was to show that there would be discord or emulation between Judah, the people of the country, and the city Jerusalem. And in the following verses we find both mentioned, as liable to envy, especially in verse 7.—*Ed.*

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shall yet be like a heap of wood, and we like fire; for though we have no strength, yet the Lord by his hidden favour will cause that our enemies shall even, by coming nigh us, be consumed.

To the same purpose is the next similitude,—that *they would be a torch in handfuls of chaff;* for here also the singular number is used for the plural. Then follows an explanation, *Consume shall they on the right hand, and on the left, all nations around.* Zechariah seems here to ascribe an insatiable cruelty, and a revengeful passion to the faithful, who yet are to be influenced by a meek spirit, so that they may imitate their heavenly Father. But here he speaks not of their disposition and feeling, but only shows, that all the ungodly shall be frustrated in their expectation of success, and not only so, but that they shall also be destroyed. The more furiously then they assail the Church, the more sudden shall be their destruction; for though the faithful may wish to spare them, yet God, the righteous judge, will not spare them. In short, the work of God himself, as in other places, is ascribed to the Church.

In the last place he declares, that *Jerusalem shall stand in its own place, where it was.* There is here a sort of repetition; and it was made, because enemies thought, as we have already stated, that they could destroy Jerusalem so as wholly to obliterate it: but the Prophet on the other hand says, that it would be established in its own place, because God had chosen it as the place where he purposed to be worshipped, and he had chosen it, as it is often said by Moses, to commemorate his own name. In a word, he intimates, that the Church would be perpetually established: though all mortals conspired for its ruin and assailed it on every side, yet the sanctuary of God, as he had promised, would continue there still, even to the advent of Christ; for then, we know, Jerusalem was to be wholly destroyed, together with the temple, as an end was to come on all these things, and the world was to be renewed.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as the condition of all those who fight under the banner of the cross of Christ seems at this day hard and even miserable,—O grant, that relying on thy promises, by which thou encouragest us, we may continually persevere, and not hesitate to remain in thy fold, though wolves lie in wait for us on every side, and robbers also and thieves furiously assail us, so that we may ever remain under the protection of thy hand, and never envy the children of this world on account of their pleasures, ease, and worldly advantages, but patiently bear to be agitated by constant fear, so that we may with quiet minds wait until thou showest to us, when we come to die, that our salvation is safe and secure in thy hand; and having thus at length passed through all troubles, we may come to that blessed rest, which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-first.

7. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify *themselves* against Judah.

7. Et servabit Iehovah tabernacula Iehudah sicut initio (*subaudiendum enim est nota similitudinis;*) itaque non gloriabitur decor (*vel*, magnificentia) domus Davidis, et decor civis Ierusalem contra Iehudam.

THE Prophet teaches us again,—that there is no need of helps when God stretches forth his hand to preserve his people; for he is alone abundantly sufficient. And the design of the verse is to show, that the Jews were to learn to acquiesce in God alone, though they might find themselves destitute of every earthly assistance; for when God purposes to save, he needs no help, as we have said; nor does he borrow any, as he by himself is fully sufficient.

But by the word, *Tabernacles*, the Prophet means, as I think, sheds, such as afforded but partial protection. It is indeed true that tents are called סכות, *sacut*, in Hebrew; but the same is often meant by the אהלים, *aelim*, tents, which afforded a temporary accommodation; for they were not strongly built, as it is evident from many passages. I allow that all houses without any difference are sometimes called

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tabernacles, אהלים, *aelim;* but the word properly signifies a tent, built as a temporary convenience; for it is said that the fathers dwelt in tents, when they had no fixed habitation.

Let us now see why the Prophet speaks of tents. He may have alluded to their dwelling in the wilderness; but as this may seem too remote, I consider that he simply refers to the tents in which the Jews dwelt when they had entered the land, after their deliverance from Egypt; for they must have been wonderfully protected by the hand of God, inasmuch as they had provoked all their neighbours and kindled the hatred of all against themselves. There were indeed some fortified cities; but for the most part they lived in villages, and the greatest part of the people were no doubt satisfied with their tents or sheds. Hence as the Israelites then had no defence, the Prophet now reminds them, that they were then protected by God alone, in order that they might believe that they should in future be safe and secure, as God would defend them to the end. There is then here an implied comparison between tents and fortified cities; and the Prophet bids them to consider what their fathers had formerly experienced, for God faithfully defended them, even when they were unprotected and exposed to the attacks of their enemies.

He says first, *Jehovah will save the tents,* &c.; as though he had said, "Know that your fathers were formerly defended by the hand of God, when they did not, as to the greater part of them, dwell in cities, but lived scattered in villages: since God then had been the preserver of his people many ages before a king was made, believe that he will be the same to you hereafter." But we must yet remember what we said yesterday,—that the Jews who had returned to their country had a promise of God's help, in order that the Israelites, who were retained by their own sloth in Babylon, might know that they were justly suffering punishment for their ingratitude, because they had not given glory to God, as they ought to have done, by committing themselves to his protection, and thus relying on his defence, so as not to seek other helps from the world: he *will* then *save* them, he

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says, *as at the beginning;* for *as*, the particle of similitude, is to be understood here.[1]

He then adds, *And hence boast shall not the honour of the house of David and the honour of the citizen of Jerusalem over Judah.* This latter clause is added, I think, by way of explanation; and this is evident from the subject itself: for God declares, that he would be the protector of the helpless, so that they would be no less victorious than if they possessed many armed soldiers, and were furnished with money and other necessaries to carry on war. For by comparing here the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with Judah, he has no doubt a regard to this,—that though there was no kingdom and no fortified cities, there would yet be sufficient protection in him alone, so that he could by himself defend the people, though unarmed, and having no swords, nor power, nor any other requisite means. *Boast* then *shall not the house of David:* and this seems to have been mentioned designedly, for while they trusted in their own wealth and power, they did not rest on God as they ought to have done.

As then the Jews had been elated with vain pride, while the dignity of the kingdom remained, and while they possessed wealth and warlike instruments, God here reproves this false confidence; for the Jews had thus obscured his

[1] So is the rendering of the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Vulgate*, and adopted by *Dathius* and *Newcome*. But the Hebrew, as it is, has been adhered to by *Drusius*, *Marckius*, and *Henderson;* and this is what the context seems to require: for the following words give the reason why the tents of Judah (which mean here the towns and villages of Judah according to *Kimchi* and to *Grotius*) were saved "first," or at first, or in the beginning; and the reason is,—that the honour or the glory of the house of David and of the citizens of Jerusalem might not be magnified above that of Judah. This is clearly the meaning of the verse. The literal rendering is as follows,—

7. But save shall Jehovah the tents of Judah first,
That the honour of the house of David,
Even the honour of the inhabitant of Jerusalem,
May not be magnified above *that* of Judah.

The "inhabitant" is the poetical singular. The word rendered "honour" is תִּפְאֶרֶת, and in the first instance rendered "καύχημα—boasting," by the *Sept.*, and in the second, "ὕψωσις—elevation," or exaltation; and the *Targum* gives a word of a similar import. But "glory" is the most common rendering: it is that of *Marckius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson.—Ed.*

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gratuitous favour. For however great might have been the treasures collected by David and Solomon, and however formidable they might have been to their enemies and the neighbouring nations, they ought yet to have relied on the protection of God alone. Since then earthly helps had inflated their minds, God now reproves their vain conceit, and shows that the condition of the people would be no less happy, when no king sat on the throne, and no aids existed for the protection of the people; and therefore he declares, that though exposed to all evils, they should yet be safe and secure, for God would defend them. This is the reason why the Prophet says, that the royal posterity would not glory against Judah, though dwelling in tents, nor the citizens of Jerusalem, who were then as it were the courtiers: for as the royal seat was at Jerusalem, a sort of vain boasting was made by all the citizens. As then all of them despised the inhabitants of the country, when the condition of the city was illustrious, the Prophet says, the posterity of David and Jerusalem *shall not* hereafter *glory* against the people of Judah, scattered in the open fields. It then follows—

8. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall be* as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

8. Die illo proteget Iehova super habitatorem Ierosolymæ; et erit qui ægrotabit inter ipsos die illo quasi David; et domus Davidis sicuti angeli (*aut*, Dii,) sicuti angelus Iehovæ coram facie ipsorum.

He goes on with the same subject; and he says that God would be like a shield to protect the Jews. For though the verb יָגֵן, *igen*, is used here, yet as it is derived from מָגֵן, *megen*, which means a shield, that metaphor is to be understood here,—even that the Jews, though without power and without warlike instruments, would yet be safe under the protection of God, for he being their shield would be sufficient. And God is here indirectly opposed to all kinds of fortresses, which men too anxiously seek, and on which they vainly depend. The Prophet then no doubt claims here for God a power, which in opposition to the whole world, and when no other help appears, would be found sufficient to subdue

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all enemies and to save his people. *Jehovah* then *shall be*, he says, *a shield*.[1]

But there seems to be here something inconsistent; for he had said before that the Jews would be safe wherever they lived, though they did not dwell at Jerusalem; but now he confines this promise to the citizens of Jerusalem. The answer to this is plain: We observed yesterday, that the piety of those was commended who had preferred to undergo many and grievous trials in returning home, and then to expose themselves to many dangers, rather than to continue in exile, as in that case they wholly separated themselves from the temple. Now since this was the object of the Prophet, it is no wonder that he one while names the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and that at another time he includes generally all the Jews. And by saying in the last verse, that the citizens of Jerusalem were not to glory against the country people, scattered in the villages, he intended, in adopting this way of speaking, to humble the citizens of Jerusalem, but not to exclude them from the promise made to all: as God then was to be the defender of all, the Prophet returns again to Jerusalem. For as God had chosen there his sanctuary, it is not to be wondered that the place was precious in his sight. But it was yet necessary to take away all pride from the Jews, that they might not, as it has been said, trust in earthly aids and supports. This is the meaning, when he says, the protection of God *shall be on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

He now adds—*The feeble*[2] *among them shall be like David.* Some give a refined explanation—that as David, who was not trained up for war, and was by no means strong, being almost a boy, yet slew the proud giant Goliath, so the feeble among the Jews, as they think, will, by God's power, be made victorious over their enemies. But this seems forced.

[1] The version of the *Sept.* is, "ὑπερασπιεῖ—will over-shield," or hold over the shield.—*Ed.*

[2] This is the rendering of the *Sept.*, and not of the Hebrew. The stumbling, or stumbler, according to *Kimchi*, is the right version. "The fallen to decay," as rendered by *Blayney*, is not to be admitted. "The stumbling" is the rendering of *Drusius*, *Marckius*, and *Henderson*. It was no doubt the weak or the feeble, but the act which betokens weakness is what the original expresses.—*Ed.*

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The Prophet, then, I have no doubt, connects the whole together, and considers David as a king; for when David slew Goliath, he was yet a boy, remarkable for no valour. After he attained the kingdom, he became more eminent, we know, in every way, than all the kings of the earth. It is then this eminence which the Prophet has in view, when he says that the least and the most despised among them would be like David; as though he had said—"They shall all be endued with royal and heroic valour, not only the common people, but even those who seemed to be like women, and who possessed nothing that was manly; they would yet excel as David in heroic valour."

It then follows—*And the whole house of David shall be as angels;* that is, the royal posterity shall be remarkable for angelic valour. And it was necessary to add this, that the faithful might not think that the house of David, from which salvation was to be expected, would be reduced to nothing. For whatever had been promised to them might have vanished, were not that promise to stand firm, on which was founded the salvation of the whole people—"Thy house shall remain for ever." (Psalm lxxxix. 37.) Now as Zechariah seemed to have cast down and wholly overthrown the royal house, it might have occurred to the minds of the faithful, "whence then shall arise our salvation? for it is certain that without Christ we are wholly lost." Now Christ was not to come forth, except from the house of David. The Prophet then does here opportunely declare, that the royal house would be most eminent, as though all the men belonging to it were angels. He puts down the word אלהים, *aleim*, which also means God; but he adds in the same sentence—*As the angel of Jehovah before their face.*[1] The Prophet

[1] Both *Gesenius* and *Lee*, according to *Henderson*, deny that angels are ever called אלהים, though the *Septuagint* have often rendered the word "angels." Here the *Sept.* introduce the word house "as the house of God;" and the *Targum* has "princes;" and kings and princes are sometimes called "gods." But the following line settles the meaning, as it is evidently an explanation—

8. And the stumbling among them, in that day,
Shall be like David,
And the house of David like God,
Like the angel of Jehovah before them.

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compares here, no doubt, the posterity of David to the angel, who had been the leader of the people and the minister of redemption. That angel we conclude was Christ; for though God then appointed many angels to his people, yet Christ, as it is well known, was their prince and head. The Prophet then bids the Jews here to look for the perpetual aid of God, since in the royal house were not only angels, but even the very leader of the fathers, who had exercised the ineffable power of God in redeeming the people.

We now then perceive the design of the Prophet: The import of the whole is, that God would so undertake the defence and protection of his people, as to be of himself sufficient, without any other aid; and also that the minister of salvation would be in the royal house itself; for as formerly, when their fathers were led out of Egypt, God had exercised his power through an angel, so now he had set over them a Mediator. And in accordance with this meaning he adds, לִפְנֵיהֶם, *lepeniem*, "before their face." He bids the faithful to attend to the royal house, which was then deprived of all dignity, so that it had no power to help. Nothing indeed was then seen in the posterity of David but what was degrading, and even contemptible; and yet the Prophet bids them to expect salvation from that house, which was so brought down as to possess nothing worthy of being noticed.

We may now ask, when was this prophecy fulfilled? Zechariah does indeed predict great things; but in reviewing all histories, nothing of a corresponding character is to be found. It must nevertheless be observed, that this blessed and happy state was promised to the Jews, because from them Christ was to arise, and also because Jerusalem was to be the mother of all Churches; for from thence the law was to go forth, and from thence God had determined to send forth the royal sceptre, that the son of David might rule over the whole world. Since the case was so, we may now

The stumbling or weak was to be strong and valiant like David, and the descendants of David were to be like God, taking the lead and guiding, even like the angel who went before them in the wilderness, who afterwards appeared as God manifested in the flesh.—*Ed.*

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easily understand how the condition of that miserable people would become happier and more glorious than under the rich and flourishing kingdom of David; for Christ would at length come, in whom complete happiness was to be found.

We may now also add this—that though few of the Jews embraced the favour of Christ, and the rest fell away, and thus gave place to the Gentiles, yet however small was the portion of the faithful, still the Prophet does not speak here hyperbolically, for the thing itself is what ought to be regarded; and that the Jews did not enjoy this blessed state, was owing to their own ingratitude; but this detracts nothing from the felicity described here by Zechariah. Let us proceed—

9. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

9. Et erit die illo, quæram ad perdendum omnes gentes, quæ venient contra Ierusalem.

The Prophet repeats again, that though ungodly and wicked men assailed the Church in great number on every side, God would yet be its defender. By saying, *I will seek to destroy*, &c., he means that God would be fully bent (*intentum*) to destroy, as men are wont to be anxious when they earnestly pursue an object. Lest then the faithful should think that they should perish through the disdain, or the neglect, or the forgetfulness of God, he says, that he would be their anxious defender. *I will seek* then, that is, I will be most earnestly solicitous, *to destroy all the nations.*

This promise no doubt extends far wider than to the Jews; for he prophesies here concerning the kingdom of Christ: for if we consider the state of the people during the whole of the intervening period, from their return to the coming of Christ, the Prophet will certainly appear to have given here a hope of something far greater than what had taken place. But he had a regard especially to Christ. Here then is promised a perpetual defence to the Church; and hence also proceeds confidence as to salvation, for God carefully watches over us, that he may effectually oppose all our enemies.

I only briefly touch on these things, which require long

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and minute consideration: but it is enough for me to show briefly the meaning of the Prophet, provided this be done clearly, so that each may then apply what is said to his own improvement. We may in the meantime learn also from the words of the Prophet, that the Church is ever to be disquieted in this world, for not only one enemy will cause trouble to it, but even many nations shall rise up against it. It follows—

10. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

10. Et effundam super domum Davidis, et super habitatorem Ierosolymæ Spiritum gratiæ et miserationum; (*vel*, precationum, *vertunt alii*;) et respicient ad me quem confixerunt; et lugebunt super ipsum tanquam luctu super unigenitum; et amarulenti erunt super eum, quasi amarulentia quæ est super primogenitum.

At the beginning of this verse the Prophet intimates, that though the Jews were then miserable and would be so in future, yet God would be merciful to them: and thus he exhorts them to patience, that they might not faint through a long-continued weariness. For it was not enough to promise to them what we have noticed respecting God's aid, except Zechariah had added, that God would at length be merciful and gracious to them after they had endured so many evils, that the world would regard them as almost consumed.

As to the *effusion of the spirit*, the expression at the first view seems hard to be understood; for what is it to pour forth the spirit of grace? He ought rather to have said thus, "I will pour my grace upon you." But what he means is, that God would be merciful, for his spirit would be moved to deliver the Jews; for he compares the spirit of God here to the mind of man, and we know that Scripture often uses language of this kind. The phrase then, *I will pour forth the spirit of grace*, may be thus suitably expressed—"I will pour forth my bowels of mercy," or, "I will open my whole heart to show mercy to this people," or, "My Spirit shall be like the spirit of man, which is wont to move him to give help to the miserable."

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We now then understand the sense in which God may be fitly said to pour forth the spirit of grace. It may yet be taken in a more refined manner, as meaning that God would not only shew mercy to his people, but also make them sensible of his mercy; and this view I am inclined to take, especially on account of what follows, *the spirit of commiserations*, or, of lamentations, for the word, תחנונים, *tachnunim*, commonly means lamentations in Hebrew. Some render it "prayers," but improperly, for they express not the force of the word. It is always put in the plural number, at least with this termination: and there is but one place where we can render it commiserations, that is, in Jer. xxxi. 9—"In commiserations will I restore them." But even there it may be rendered lamentations consistently with the whole verse; for the Prophet says, "They shall weep," and afterwards adds, "In lamentations will I restore them." The greater part indeed of interpreters render it here, prayers; but the Hebrews prefer to translate it commiserations, and for this reason, because they consider that the spirit of grace is nothing else but simply grace itself. The spirit of grace is indeed grace itself united with faith: for God often hears the miserable, extends his hand to them, and brings them a most effectual deliverance, while they still continue blind and remain unconcerned. It is then far better that the spirit of grace should be poured forth on us, than grace itself: for except the spirit of God penetrate into our hearts and instil into us a feeling need of grace, it will not only be useless, but even injurious; for God at length will take vengeance on our ingratitude when he sees his grace perishing through our indifference. What then the Prophet, in my opinion, means is, that God will at length be so propitious to the Jews as to pour forth on them the *spirit of grace*, and then *the spirit of lamentations*, in order to obtain grace.

They who render the word prayers, do not, as I have already said, convey the full import of the term. But we may also take commiserations in a passive sense and consistently with its common meaning: *I will pour forth the spirit of grace*, that they themselves may perceive my grace;

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and then, *the spirit of commiserations*, that having deplored their evils, they may understand that they have been delivered by a power from above. Hence Zechariah promises here more than before; for he speaks not here of God's external aid, by which they were to be defended, but of inward grace, by which God would pour hidden joy into their hearts, that they might know and find by a sure experience that he was propitious to them.

But if the word תחנונים, *tachnunim*, be rendered commiserations, the meaning would be, as I have already stated, that the Jews, through the dictation and the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, would find God merciful to them; but if we render it lamentations, then the Prophet must be viewed as saying something more—that the Jews, previously so hardened in their evils, as not to flee to God for help, would become at length suppliants, because the Spirit would inwardly so touch their hearts as to lead them to deplore their state before God, and thus to express their complaints to Him:[1] and this view is more fully confirmed by what follows.

They shall look to me, he says, *whom they have pierced.* We then see here that not only an external grace or favour was promised to the Jews, but an internal light of faith, the author of which is the Spirit; for he it is who illuminates our minds to see the goodness of God, and it is he also who turns our hearts: and for this reason he adds, *They shall look to me.*[2] For God, as I have already reminded you, deals

[1] The two words are thus expressed by the *Septuagint*, πνεῦμα χάριτος καὶ οἰκτιρμοῦ—"the Spirit of grace and of commiseration;" and in similar terms by the *Targum*. For the last word, *Jerome*, *Drusius*, and *Piscator* have "deprecationum—of entreaties;" and our *version*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*, "supplications." Both these authors have "A spirit," &c., as though an impulse or a disposition is meant by "Spirit," as *Grotius* understood the expression: but "Spirit" here signifies the same as Spirit in Joel ii. 28, "I will pour out my Spirit," &c.; and is called "The Spirit of grace and entreaties" or supplications, because he, the divine Spirit, is the author of them. Renewing grace and sincere entreaties come from the Spirit. The latter word, derived from a reduplicate verb, signifies more than supplications; it means earnest supplications or entreaties.—*Ed.*

[2] *Respicient ad me*, והביטו אלי. The same phrase is rendered "look upon," in Ex. iii. 6; Numb. xxi. 8; and "look unto," in Ps. xxxiv. 5; Is. xxii. 11; li. 1, 2. *Newcome* follows our version, while *Henderson* follows

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very bountifully with the unbelieving, but they are blind; and hence he pours forth his grace without any benefit, as though he rained on flint or on arid rocks. However bountifully then God may bestow his grace on the unbelieving, they yet render his favour useless, for they are like stones.

Now, as Zechariah declares that the Jews would at length *look to* God, it follows, that the spirit of repentance and the light of faith are promised to them, so that they may know God as the author of their salvation, and feel so assured that they are already saved, as in future to devote themselves entirely to him: *they shall* then *look to me whom they have pierced.* Here also the Prophet indirectly reproves the Jews for their great obstinacy, for God had restored them, and they had been as untamable as wild beasts; for this piercing is to be taken metaphorically for continual provocation, as though he had said, that the Jews in their perverseness were prepared as it were for war, that they goaded and pierced God by their wickedness or by the weapons of their rebellion. As then they had been such, he says now, that such a change would be wrought by God that they would become quite different, for they would learn to *look to him whom* they had previously *pierced.* We cannot finish to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are this day surrounded with enemies, and without any defence, so that our safety seems to be every moment in danger,—O grant, that we may raise up our hearts to thee, and being satisfied with thy protection alone, may we despise whatever Satan and the whole world may threaten us with, and thus continue impregnable while carrying on our warfare, so that we may at length reach that happy rest, where we shall enjoy not only those good things which thou hast promised to us on earth, but also that glorious and triumphant victory which we shall partake of together with our head, even Christ Jesus, as he has overcome the world for us, in order that he might gather us to himself, and make us partakers of his victory and of all his blessings.—Amen.

Calvin, "look unto me." Inasmuch as the phrase admits of these two meanings, and as St. John, not following the *Septuagint,* interpreted it in the sense of our version, it ought to be so regarded—to look upon as an object before our eyes.—*Ed.*

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Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-second.

We said in our yesterday's lecture, that the words, *They shall look to me whom they have pierced,* are to be taken metaphorically,[1] for the Prophet expresses here what he had said before—that the Jews would some time return to a sound mind, that is, when endued with a spirit of grace and of commiserations. For it is a true conversion when men seriously acknowledge that they are at war with God, and that he is their enemy until they are reconciled; for except a sinner sets himself in a manner before God's tribunal, he is never touched by a true feeling of repentance. It is therefore necessary for us to remember, that God has been offended by us, and that we have, as far as we could, instigated him to destroy us, inasmuch as we have provoked his wrath and his vengeance. This then is the real meaning of the Prophet here: for the Jews, after having in various ways and for a long time heedlessly provoked God, would sometime be led to repentance, inasmuch as they would become terrified by God's judgment, while no one of them thought previously that they had any account to render.

John says that this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ, when his side was pierced by a spear, (John xix. 37;) and this is most true: for it was necessary that the visible symbol should be exhibited in the person of Christ, in order that the Jews might know that he was the God who had spoken by the Prophets; and we have elsewhere seen similar instances. The Jews then had crucified their God when they grieved his Spirit; but Christ also was as to his flesh pierced by them. And this is what John means—that God by that visible symbol made it evident, that he had not only been

[1] This principle of interpretation, which *Calvin* has elsewhere mentioned, is a very important one. What was metaphorically applied to God, or rather to the Messiah as the king and shepherd of Israel, before his appearance in the flesh, became afterwards literally true of him in his incarnate state. The people of Israel or the Jews, "pierced" him by their provocations while he was their king before his incarnation; they afterwards literally "pierced" him on Calvary. The same view may be taken, and is taken by *Calvin*, of many similar expressions borrowed from the Prophets and applied to Christ.—*Ed.*

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formerly provoked in a disgraceful manner by the Jews, but that at length in the person of his only-begotten Son this great sin was added to their disgraceful impiety, that they pierced even the side of Christ. It is indeed true, that the side of Christ was pierced by a Roman soldier, but, as Peter says, he was crucified by the Jews, for they were the authors of his death, and Pilate was almost forced by them to condemn him. (Acts ii. 38.) So then the piercing of his side is justly to be ascribed to the Jews, for they executed what their mad impiety suggested by the hand of a foreign soldier.

But it must be observed, that the words of the Prophet are not cited by John with reference to repentance, for he does not speak there of repentance; but his object was briefly to show, that Christ is that God who had from the beginning spoken by the Prophets; for he says, *They shall look to me.* It is certain that the only true God, the creator of heaven and earth, declared this through his Spirit by the mouth of Zechariah. Then Christ is that same God. We do not, however, thus confound the persons; but we are to conclude that the essence of the Father and of the Son is simple and the same, which those wicked men, who now disturb the Church, attempt to deny. For they imagine that the Father is the only true God, and then they allow that Christ also is a God; but they divise a new kind of divinity, like a river issuing from a fountain. They therefore deny that Christ is the only true God; though they allow that he was begotten from eternity, they yet teach us that the essence of the Father and of the Son is not the same; and they regard Christ as some sort of phantom, I know not what; for they will never allow him to be that God, the author of this prophecy. They say, as they necessarily must say, that Zechariah spoke by his Spirit; but they even account for this by referring to the proximate and the second cause, inasmuch as God the Father employed his own Son. They, however, pertinaciously contend, that Christ is a God not of the same essence with the Father; for the word God, as they imagine, does not properly belong to any but to the Father.

But we clearly see how the Holy Spirit condemns this

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blasphemy; for he shows by the mouth of the evangelist, that he was not a kind of a second God, who was crucified, but that he was the God who spoke by Moses, and who thus declared himself to be the only true God, and affirmed the same by the mouth of Isaiah—"My glory will I not give to another: I, I am, and none besides me." (Isaiah xlii. 8.)

Now follows what we read in our last lecture, but time did not allow me to give an explanation: *Lament*, he says, *shall they for him a lamentation as that for an only-begotten; and bitter shall they be for him as with a bitterness for a first-born.* Zechariah goes on with the same subject; for he promises as before the spirit of repentance to the Jews, and mentions a particular kind of repentance; but by stating a part for the whole, he includes under this kind every part of it. The beginning of repentance, we know, is grief and lamentation. As then by the phrase, "They shall look to me," he had not sufficiently expressed what he wished, he now explains his meaning more clearly by mentioning lamentation and grief, that God would at length grant the Jews repentance for having crucified Christ. The person indeed is changed; but we know that it is a common thing with the Prophets to introduce God as speaking, now in the first person, then in the second person.[1] If any one be disposed to think that there is a difference marked out here as to the person, I do not object; but I fear that it is a refinement that will not stand. At the same time we may state this explanation—*They shall look to me whom they pierced.* Was God the Father pierced? By no means; for he had not put on flesh in which he could have suffered; but this was done by his only begotten Son. Why then does the Father say, *They shall look to me?* the answer given is, because of

[1] It is true that this is often the case; yet as John (ch. xix. 37) quotes the preceding sentence from the Hebrew, and not from the *Septuagint*, and in a manner that implies the third person, we may regard "on me" as a mistake for "on him." All the early versions are indeed in favour of "on me," and also the best MSS.; and swayed by these authorities, *Dathius* and *Henderson* have retained this reading; but *Kennicott* and *Newcome*, supported by some of the early fathers, and also by thirty-six MSS., as stated by the last, have adopted "on him:" and this seems to be the best course. Neither *Dathius* nor *Henderson* gives a satisfactory solution of the difficulty as to the quotation of St. John.—*Ed.*

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the unity of the essence. It then follows—*And they shall lament for him and be bitter for him.* There is here a transition from the first to the third person; for though Christ is the same with the Father, yet different as to his person. But, as I have already said, I am not inclined to enforce this view; for the Hebrew mode of speaking seems to countenance the other opinion—that the Prophet first introduces God as the speaker, and then narrates himself, as God's minister, what would take place.

But what I have just referred to is doubtless true—that repentance is here described by stating a part for the whole; for the first thing in order is sorrow, according to what Paul teaches us in 2 Cor. vii. 10; and the reason may also be gathered from what I have said—that it cannot be that sin will displease us, and we repent, except our guilt goad and wound us, while we acknowledge that God is an avenger of sins, and that we have to do with him; for when God the Judge comes forth to punish us, must we not necessarily be smitten with dreadful grief and alarm, yea, be almost swallowed up by it? Hence that bitterness that is mentioned; and hence lamentation; for it cannot be otherwise, when we dread God's vengeance suspended over us.

But the Prophet, it may be said, seems to mean something else—that they will lament on account of Christ, and not on their own account. To this a ready answer may be given—that the fountain and cause of lamentation is pointed out; for ingratitude will constrain the Jews to lament, inasmuch as they will acknowledge that in their perverse obstinacy they had carried on war with God and his only-begotten Son. He does not then understand that the death of Christ would be bitter to them, as we are wont to shed tears and to lament at the death of a friend, or of a brother or of a son; but because they would know and feel that they had been extremely blind, and by their sins provoked God.

Jerome thought that Christ is called the only-begotten with regard to his Divine nature, and the first-born, because he is the elder brother of all the godly, and the Head of the Church. The sentiment is indeed true, but I know not whether it be the sentiment of the Prophet in this passage.

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I therefore prefer to take this simple view of what is here said,—that the Jews, after having despised Christ, would at length acknowledge him to be a precious and invaluable treasure, the contempt of whom deserved the vengeance of God. Let us proceed—

11. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.	11. In die illo magnificabitur (*ad verbum*, magnus erit) luctus in Ierusalem, sicut luctus Hadadrimon in planitie Megedon.

The Prophet says nearly the same thing to the end of the chapter; but as the event was worthy of being commemorated, he embellishes it with many figurative terms. He then says, that the *lamentation* for the death of Christ would be like that after the death of Josiah; for they who would have Hadadrimmon to be a man's name, have no reason for what they hold, and indulge themselves in mere conjecture. It is indeed agreed almost by all that Hadadrimmon was either a town connected with the plain of Megiddon, or a country near Jezreel. But as to what it was, it is a matter of no great consequence. I indeed believe that Hadadrimmon was a neighbouring town, or a part of that country in which was situated the plain of Megiddon.[1]

We may now observe, that this comparison which the Prophet institutes is very apposite; for when Josiah was slain by the King of Egypt, it is said in 2 Chr. v. 30, that an yearly lamentation was appointed. The Jews then were wont every year to lament the death of Josiah; for from that time it was evident that God was so displeased with the people, that they had no longer any hope of deliverance; nay, Jeremiah in his mournful song had special reference to Josiah, as it appears from sacred history. And, among other things, he says, that Christ our Lord, in whose life lived our life, was slain for our sins. Jeremiah then acknowledges that it was a special proof of God's vengeance,

[1] "*Jerome* says that this (Hadadrimmon) was a place near Jezreel, called in his time Maximaniopolis. De Lisle places it near Megiddo, where Josiah was slain, over whom great lamentation was made, 2 Chron. xxxv. 22-25."—*Newcome*.

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that that pious king was taken away, and that the Jews were thus as it were forsaken, and became afterwards like a dead body, inasmuch as they only breathed in the life of Josiah: and at the same time he reminds us, that the kingdom, which God had intended to be the type and image of the kingdom of Christ, had as it were ceased to exist; for the successor of Josiah was deprived of all royal honour, and at length not only the whole dignity, but also the safety of the people, were trampled under foot. Hence, most fitly does the Prophet apply this lamentation to the death of Christ; as though he had said,—That the Jews lamented yearly the death of Josiah, because it was an evidence of the dreadful vengeance of God that they were deprived of that pious ruler; and that now there would be a similar lamentation, when they perceived that their light of salvation was extinguished, because they had crucified the Son of God, unless they humbly acknowledged their great wickedness, and obtained pardon.

We now then see the true meaning of the Prophet, when he says, that the lamentation in Jerusalem would be like that in Megiddon.

Were any to object and say, that the death of Christ was not accompanied with tears and mourning; I answer,—that the penitence of believers only is here described; for we know that a few only of the whole people were converted to God: but it is not to be wondered that the Prophet speaks generally of the whole nation, though he referred only to the elect of God and a small remnant; for God regarded those few who repented as the whole race of Abraham. Some mention the women of whom Luke speaks; but this seems too confined and strained: and we find also that that lamentation was forbidden by Christ, "Weep," he says, "for yourselves and for your children, not for me." (Luke xxiii. 28.) Since then Christ shows that that weeping was vain and useless, we may surely say that what is here said by Zechariah was not then fulfilled. And we must bear in mind what I have said before,—that by lamentation and sorrow is described that repentance with which the Jews were favoured,

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not indeed all, but such as had been ordained to salvation by the gratuitous adoption of God. It follows—

12. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

13. The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

14. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

12. Et lugebit terra, familiæ, familiæ seorsum; familia domus Davidis seorsum, et uxores eorum seorsum; familia domus Nathan seorsum, et uxores eorum seorsum;

13. Familia domus Levi seorsum, et uxores eorum seorsum; familia Simei seorsum, et uxores eorum seorsum;

14. Omnes familiæ residuæ, familiæ, familiæ seorsum (*hoc est*, singulæ familiæ seorsum,) et uxores eorum seorsum.

Zechariah seems to have used more words than necessary to complete his subject; for he appears to be diffuse on a plain matter: but we ought to attend to its vast importance; for it seemed incredible, that any of that nation would repent, since they had almost all been given up to a reprobate mind. For who could have thought that there was any place for the favour of God, inasmuch as all, as far as they could, even from the least to the greatest, attempted to involve Christ in darkness? When therefore the Sun of Righteousness was as it were extinguished by the Jews, it seemed probable that they were a nation repudiated by God. But the Prophet here shows, that God would be mindful of his covenant, so that he would turn to himself some of all the families.

Lament, he says, *shall the land*. This indeed we know did not take place as to the body of the people, but God, to whom a small flock is precious, denominates here as the whole land the faithful, who had felt how grievously they had sinned, and were so pricked in their hearts as though they had pierced the Son of God. (Acts ii. 37.) And though the Jews had destroyed themselves, yet through special and wonderful favour, three thousand were converted at one sermon by Peter; and then many in Greece, Asia Minor, and in the East, repented, and many Churches arose everywhere,

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as though God had created a new people. If these things be rightly viewed by us, we shall not think it unreasonable that Zechariah promises repentance to the whole land.

What he said before of Jerusalem ought not to be so taken as though he confined what he said to one city, but under this name he includes the whole nation, dispersed through distant parts of the world.

He says now, that this lamentation would be in *every family apart.* By which word he means, that it would not be a feigned or pretended ceremony, as when one begins to weep and draws tears from the eyes of others. The Prophet then testifies that it would be real sorrow, for one would not imitate another, but every one, impelled by his own feeling, would really grieve and lament. This then is the reason why he says that families would lament apart. Indeed the faithful ought to stimulate others by their example and encourage them to repent, but in a congregation hardly one in ten prays in earnest for pardon and really laments on account of his sins. Since therefore men are thus born to hypocrisy, and are confirmed in it by the whole practice of their life, it is no wonder that the Prophet, in order to set forth real sorrow, represents here every family by itself; as though he had said, "The family of David shall know that it had sinned, and the family of Levi, though it may not observe such an example, shall yet inwardly acknowledge its guilt." We now see why Zechariah repeats the word *apart* so often.

By saying that the *women* wept *apart*, he means no doubt the same thing with what we find in the second chapter of Joel, "Go forth let the bridegroom from his chamber, and the bride from her recess." Men in grief, we know, withdraw from all pleasures and all joy. As then men usually separate themselves from their wives during the appointed time of public grief or mourning, the Prophet makes the women to be by themselves: he intimates at the same time that the women would not wait until the men showed them an example of mourning, but that they would of themselves, and through a feeling of their own, be inclined to lament.

But we must bear in mind what I lately said,—that the grief which the Jews felt for the death of Christ is not what

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is described, but rather that by which they were touched when God opened their eyes to repent for their own perverseness; for the death of Christ, we know, is a cause of joy to us rather than of sorrow, but the joy arising from Christ's death cannot shine in us until our guilt really wounds us through God's appearing to us as a threatening judge. From this sorrow then arises the desire to repent and the true fear of God. Hence it is, that God himself will give us joy, for he will not have us, as Paul says, to be swallowed up with sorrow; he lays us prostrate, that he may again raise us up.

Now, why he names the *house of Levi*, and the *house of Shimei*, or of Simeon, and *the house of David*, and *the house of Nathan*, rather than the other tribes, is uncertain: yet it seems to me probable that by the family of David he means the whole tribe of Judah, and the same by the family of Nathan. As to the tribe of Levi it excelled in honour on account of the priesthood, but no honour belonged to Simeon. Why then are Issachar and Reuben the first-born, and the other tribes omitted here? It might indeed have been, that there were then remaining more from the tribes of Simeon and Levi than from the tribe of Zebulon or of Issachar or of Reuben; but this is uncertain, and I am not disposed to make much of mere conjectures. But I am inclined to think that the family of David and the tribe of Levi are here mentioned not for the sake of honour but of reproach, because the royal family and the priests were those who crucified Christ, and pierced God in the person of his only-begotten Son. *Jerome* conjectures, that the family of Nathan is named, because he was a celebrated Prophet and eminent above others, and that the Prophets are designated by him. He says that many teachers arose from the tribe of Simeon; but I know not where he got his information, for he adduces no proofs.[1]

[1] What he says in substance is, that the family of David represented the royal order—of Nathan, the prophetic—of Levi, the sacerdotal—and of Simeon, the order of teachers, as from that tribe many of them had proceeded. The same view was taken by *Theodoret* and *Cyril*. It was thought by *Marckius* that Nathan the son of David is meant, who represented, not the royal line, but his other descendants, and that Shimei

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But I am satisfied with the simple view already given,—that the Prophet by mentioning certain families meant to include the whole people, and that he does not omit the royal family nor the priests, because they were especially those who crucified Christ: and we know that Christ descended from Nathan, though *Jerome* thought the Prophet to be intended here rather than Nathan, one of Christ's progenitors: but these things are of small moment.

He says in the last place, that this lamentation would be common to *all the remaining families.* Though few had returned, except those from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, and from the tribe of Levi, yet Zechariah, as I think, means here by the *remaining* families, the elect who had been miraculously delivered from the common ruin; for blindness had so prevailed, that the rejection of the whole people on the part of God was evident. Under this designation then I consider the remnants of grace, as Paul says, to be included; as though the Prophet had said, that he had spoken of sorrow, not with regard to the whole nation indiscriminately, but to that part which was a remnant according to the gratuitous election of God. Now follows—

belonged to the tribe of Levi, and represented the Levites, not the priestly line; see Num. iii. 18; and *Henderson's* view is the same. But *Blayney* thought that they were all the progenitors of our Saviour. Luke iii. 29-31.

Instead of "Shimei," the *Septuagint*, the *Arabic*, and *Syriac*, have "Simeon," which *Newcome* adopts as the true reading. Three MSS., the *Syriac*, and the *Targum*, supply "house" before it.

Was not this prophecy literally fulfilled in the time of Ezra? His return, and the reformation he effected, were several years *posterior* to the time when this prophecy was delivered. The brief account, given in the ninth and tenth chapters of Ezra, clearly intimates a state of things similar to what is here described. See especially ch. ix. 1-4; x. 1, 9, 14; and the names of those who had transgressed, 20-44. The priestly line of Levi and those of inferior order are mentioned, and also those "of Israel," denominated "princes and rulers" in ch. ix. 2. We hence see a reason for the lamentation of the "wives," and these apart.—*Ed.*

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CHAPTER XIII.

1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

1. In die illo erit fons apertus domui Davidis, et incolis Ierosolymæ, ad peccatum et ad immunditiam (*vel*, ad expiationem et aspersionem.)

From this verse we again learn, that Zechariah promised the spirit of repentance to the Jews, so that they would find God still propitious to them, when their circumstances were brought to the verge of despair: for it would not have been enough for them to feel sorrow, except God himself became propitious and merciful to them. He had said indeed that the Spirit of grace and of commiserations would be poured forth; but he had not as yet taught clearly what he now adds respecting remission and pardon. After having then declared that there would be felt by the Jews the bitterest sorrow, because they had as it were pierced God, he now mentions the fruit of this repentance. And hence also appears what Paul means by sorrow not to be repented of; for it generates repentance unto salvation. When then our sorrow is blessed by the Lord, the end is to be regarded; for our hearts are thereby raised up to joy. But the issue of repentance, as Zechariah declares here, is ablution: and he alludes to the legal rites when he says,

A fountain shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. We know that formerly under the law many washings were prescribed to the Jews; and when any one had become defiled, to wash himself was the remedy. It is certain that water was of no value to cleanse the heart; but the sins of men, we know, are expiated by the death of Christ, so that true ablution is by the blood which he shed for us.[1] Hence the types of the law ought

[1] *Jerome* and *Cyril* say that the "fountain" is baptism; but *Theodoret* with more wisdom considered it to be the blood of Christ. *Marckius* regarded it as the grace of God flowing to us through the merits of the Redeemer, and applied for justification and sanctification. The word "fountain," says *Drusius*, intimates the perennity and abundance of grace. —*Ed.*

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no doubt to be referred to this blood. The meaning is—that God would be reconciled to the Jews when they became touched with sincere sorrow, and that reconciliation would be ready for them, for the Lord would cleanse them from every defilement.

He speaks of a *fountain opened;* and he no doubt intimates here a difference between the law and the gospel. Water was brought daily to the temple; but it was, we know, for private washings. But Zechariah promises here a perpetual stream of cleansing water; as though he had said, "Ablution will be free to all, when God shall again receive his people into favour." Though remission of sins was formerly offered under the law, yet it is now much more easily obtained by us; not that God grants a license to sin, but that the way in which our filth is cleansed, has become more evident since the coming of Christ. For the fathers under the law were indeed fully assured that God was so propitious as not to impute sins; but where was the pledge of ablution? In the sprinkling of blood, and that blood was the blood of a calf or a lamb. Now since we know that we have been redeemed by Christ, and that our souls are sprinkled with his blood by the hidden power of the Holy Spirit, it is doubtless the same as though God had not only set before our eyes our ablution, but also placed it as it were in our hands, while to the fathers it was more obscure or shown to them at a distance.

And he says, *To the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* He had before restricted God's favour to that city, that he might goad the Jews, who had preferred their outward gratifications to so great a happiness; for they thought themselves happy in their exile, because they inhabited a pleasant and fruitful country, and enjoyed quietness and peace; and thus it happened that they despised the deliverance offered to them. Hence the Prophet promises here to the citizens of Jerusalem and to the royal family a fountain in which they might wash away their filth; for from Sion was the law to go forth, and from Jerusalem the word of the Lord. (Is. ii. 2.) And we know that from

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thence were taken the first-fruits of the new Church.[1] What we have before seen respecting God's favour being extended farther, is no objection; for both events were in their due order fulfilled, as God blessed the tribe of Judah, who trusted in his promises and returned to their own country, and afterwards extended wider his favour, and gathered into one body those who had been dispersed through distant parts of the world.

He adds, *For sin and for uncleanness*, or as some read, "for sprinkling," which is by no means suitable, except the word "sin" be taken for expiation. The word is derived from נדד, *nedad*, but it often means sprinkling, sometimes uncleanness, and sometimes the uncleanness of women, and so some render it here. The verb signifies to remove or to separate; and hence נדה, *nede*, is the removal of a woman from her husband during her uncleanness, but it is applied to designate any uncleanness. It might indeed be taken here for the uncleanness of women, as an instance of a part for the whole; but I am led by the context to render it uncleanness. Now if we translate חטאת, *chethat*, sin, then נדה, *nede*, must be rendered uncleanness; but if the first be expiation, then the second may be sprinkling: and this meaning I am disposed to take, for under the law sins were cleansed by sacrifices as well as by washings.[2]

[1] The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were specifically mentioned, says *Grotius*, because they had grievously offended. The design seems to have been to point out those who had been most guilty, who had been themselves the murderers of their own Messiah. This fountain was yet opened for them.—*Ed.*

[2] For sin and for defilement, *Newcome*.
For guilt and for uncleanness, *Henderson*.

Our version cannot be mended "for sin and for uncleanness." The latter word, נדה, has been strangely rendered by some. Its first meaning is removal or separation, which took place in case of uncleanness: but it is also used to designate the *cause* of removal, even uncleanness, and that generally, as we find from Ezra ix. 11, where the "land" is said to be "unclean (נדה) with the filthiness (נדת) of the people," or rather polluted with the pollution of the people "of the lands." It is used in this text as synonymous with טמא, which means what is unclean, defiled, or polluted. See Ezra vi. 21.

This verse is most strangely rendered by the *Septuagint*, in a way quite unaccountable. The three other versions—*Aq.*, *Sym.*, and *Theod.*,—are not very far from the original.—*Ed.*

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The import of the whole then is—that though the Jews had in various ways defiled themselves, so that they were become filthy before God, and their uncleanness was abominable, yet a fountain would be prepared for them, by which they might cleanse themselves, so as to come before God pure and clean. We hence see that it was the Prophet's object to show, that the repentance of which he had spoken would not be useless, for there would be a sure issue, when God favoured the Jews, and showed himself propitious to them, and already pacified, and even provided for them a cleansing by the blood of his only-begotten Son, so that no filth might prevent them to call on him boldly and in confidence; for instead of the legal rites there would be the reality, as their hearts would be sprinkled by the Spirit, so that they would be purified by faith, and would thus cast away all their filth.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased to adopt us as thy people, and from being thine enemies, profane and reprobate, to make us the children of Abraham, that we might be to thee a holy heritage,—O grant, that through the whole course of our life we may so repent as to attain thy mercy, which is daily set before us in thy gospel, and of which thou hast given us a sure pledge in the death of thy only Son, so that we may become more and more humble before thee, and labour to form our life according to the rule of righteousness, and so loathe ourselves, that we may at the same time be allured by the sweetness of thy goodness to call upon thee, and that being thus united to thee, we may be confirmed in the faith, until we shall reach that blessed rest which has been procured for us by the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-third.

2. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

2. Et erit in die illa, dicit Iehova exercituum, Excidam (*vel*, delebo) nomina simulachrorum è terra, et non erunt in memoria amplius; atque etiam Prophetas et spiritum immundum auferam (*vel*, exterminabo, *ad verbum est*, transire faciam) è terra.

Here the Prophet mentions another effect, which would follow the repentance of the people, and which the Lord also would thereby produce. There was to be a cleansing from all the defilements of superstitions; for the pure and lawful worship of God cannot be set up without these filthy things being wiped away; inasmuch as to blend sacred with profane things, is the same thing as though one sought to take away the difference between heaven and earth. No religion then can be approved by God, except what is pure and free from all such pollution. We hence see why the Prophet adds, that there would be an end to falsehoods and all errors, and to the delusions of Satan, when God restored his Church; for the simplicity of true doctrine would prevail, and thus abolished would be whatever Satan had previously invented to corrupt religion.

We hence learn what I have just stated—that God cannot be rightly worshipped, except all corruptions, inconsistent with his sincere and pure worship, be taken away. But we must at the same time observe, that this effect is ascribed to God's word; for it is that which can drive away and banish all the abominations of falsehood, and whatever is uncongenial to true religion. As then by the rising of the sun darkness is put to flight, and all things appear distinctly to the view, so also when God comes forth with the teaching of his word, all the deceptions of Satan must necessarily be dissipated.

Now these two things ought especially to be known; for we see that many, who are not indeed ungodly, but foolish and inconsiderate, think that they give to God his due

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honour, while they are entangled in many errors, and refrain not from superstitions. Others, more politic, devise this way of peace—that they who think rightly are to concede something to tyrants and false Prophets; and thus they seek to form at this day a new religion for us, made up of Popery and of the simple doctrine of the gospel, and in this manner as it were to transform God. As then we see that men are so disposed to mix all sorts of things together, that the pure simplicity of the gospel may be contaminated by various inventions, we ought to bear in mind this truth,—that the Church cannot be rightly formed, until all superstitions be rejected and banished. This is one thing.

We may also deduce hence another principle—that the word of God not only shows the way to us, but also discovers all the delusions of Satan; for hardly one in a hundred follows what is right, except he is reminded of what he ought to avoid. It is then not enough to declare that there is but one true God, and that we ought to put our trust in Christ, except another thing be added, that is, except we warn men of those intrigues by which Satan has from the beginning deceived miserable mortals: even at this day with what various artifices has he withdrawn the simple and unwary from the true God, and entangled them in a labyrinth of superstitions. Except therefore men be thus warned, the word of God is made known to them only in part. Whosoever then desires to perform all the duties of a good and faithful pastor, ought firmly to resolve, not only to abstain from all impure doctrines, and simply to assert what is true, but also to detect all corruptions which are injurious to religion, to recover men from the deceptions of Satan, and in short, avowedly to carry on war with all superstitions.

This was what Zechariah had in view when he said, *In that day*, that is, when God would restore his Church, *perish shall the names of idols*,[1] *so that they shall be remembered no more.* By this last expression he sets forth more clearly what I have just stated, that the pure worship of God is then estab-

[1] עֲצַבִּים, from עָצַב, to work, to labour, because of the labour taken to form and adorn them. As to the "names," see Ex. xxiii. 13; Deut. xii. 3; Ps. xvi. 4.—*Ed.*

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lished as it ought to be, and that religion has then its own honour, when all errors and impostures cease, so that even the memory of them does not remain. It is indeed true, that superstitions can never be so abolished, so that no mention of them should be made; nay, the recollection of them is useful—"Thou shalt remember thy ways," says Ezekiel, "and be ashamed," (Ezek. xvi. 6.) But by this form of speaking Zechariah means, that such would be the detestation of superstitions, that the people would dread the very mention of them. And hence we may learn how much purity of doctrine is approved by God, since he would have us to feel a horror as at something monstrous, whenever the name of an idol is mentioned.

He then refers to false teachers, *I will exterminate*, he says, *the Prophets and the unclean Spirit*[1] *from the land*. The connection here is worthy of being noticed; for it hence appears how all errors arise, even when a loose rein is given to false teachers. It is indeed true I allow, that the seed of all errors is implanted in each of us, so that every one is a teacher to deceive himself; for we are not only disposed to what is false, but rush headlong into it: it is the corruption of our nature. But at the same time when liberty is taken to teach anything that may please men, the whole of religion must necessarily be corrupted, and all things become mixed together, so that there is no difference between light and darkness. God then here reminds us, that the Church cannot stand, except false teachers be prevented from turning truth into falsehood, and from prating at their pleasure against the word of God.

And this is what ought to be carefully observed; for we see at this day how some unprincipled men adopt this sen-

[1] Or, "the spirit which pollutes," or, "the polluted spirit." It is rendered "the unclean (ακαθαρτον) spirit," by the *Septuagint*, a phrase used often in the gospels. The word טמא, polluting, or polluted, stands opposed to קדש, holy, applied to the divine Spirit. If it be rendered polluting, the effect produced by it is designated, or if polluted, the character of the Spirit itself. It is no doubt the same with the "lying spirit," mentioned by Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 13. "He thus calls," says *Drusius*, "either the emotions excited in the heart by the evil spirit, *i.e.*, Satan, or the impure doctrine of the false prophets which proceeds from the impure spirit."—*Ed.*

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timent—that the Church is not free, except every one is allowed with impunity to promulgate whatever he pleases, and that it is the greatest cruelty to punish a heretic; for they would have all liberty to be given to blasphemies. But the Prophet shows here, that the Church cannot be preserved in a pure state, and, in a word, that it cannot exist as a healthy and sound body, except the rashness and audacity of those who pervert sound and true doctrine be restrained.

We now then understand the import of this verse—that in order that God may be alone and indeed be rightly worshipped, he will take away and banish all idols and all superstitions, and also, that he will exterminate all ungodly teachers who pervert sound doctrine.

He calls them first *Prophets*, and then *unclean spirits*. The name of Prophets is conceded to them, though they were wholly unworthy of so honourable a title. As ungodly men ever boast themselves in an audacious manner and hesitate not to pretend God's name, that they may more boldly proceed in deceiving: hence it is, that Scripture sometimes concedes to them a name which they falsely claim. So also the word spirit is sometimes applied to them—"Prove the spirits, whether they are of God: every spirit that denies that Christ has come in the flesh, he is a liar." (1 John iv. 1.) John doubtless adopted this mode of speaking according to common usage; for all false teachers claimed this title with great confidence, and maintained that all the errors they spread abroad were revealed to them by the Spirit. "Be it so then, but ye are lying spirits."

Now then as to this title, there is no obscurity in what the Prophet means: and by way of explanation he adds the unclean spirit, that he might distinguish those vile men from the faithful ministers of God; as though he had said, "They indeed declare that they have drawn down the Spirit from heaven; but it is the spirit of the devil, it is an unclean spirit." Now as Zechariah declares, that this would be in the Church of God, we learn how foolish the Papists are, who are content with the mere title of honour, and claim to themselves the greatest power, and will have themselves

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heard without dispute, as though they were the organs of the Spirit. What right indeed do they pretend? that they have been called by the Lord. The same reason might have been assigned by these unprincipled men, whom it was necessary to drive away, in order that the Church might rise again. It then follows that we are not to consider only what name a person has, or with what title he is distinguished, but how rightly he conducts himself, and how faithfully he performs his duties and discharges the office of a pastor. Let us proceed—

3. And it shall come to pass, *that* when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

3. Et erit, quum prophetaverit vir (*hoc est,* quispiam) adhuc, dicent ad eum pater ejus et mater ejus, qui eum genuerunt, Non vives, quia mendacium loquutus es in nomine Iehovæ; et transfigent eum (*vel,* confodient, *nam habetur verbum illud,* דָּקַר, *quod heri vidimus*) pater ejus et mater ejus, qui genuerunt eum, quia prophetaverit.

The same concession is made in this verse, where Zechariah speaks of the office of prophesying: he indeed confines what he says altogether to false teachers, for he takes it as granted that there was then no attention given to God's servants, inasmuch as false spirits had conspired together, so that nothing pure or sound remained in the Church. As then a false and diabolical faction had then prevailed, Zechariah calls them Prophets as though they were all such, for they were heard as the Lord's servants during that disorder of which mention is made. But he proceeds farther in this verse than before, and says, that there would be so much zeal in God's children when renewed by his Spirit, that they would not spare even their own children, but slay them with their own hands, when they saw them perverting the truth of God.

Zechariah no doubt alludes to the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy, where God requires such a rigorous severity in defending pure doctrine, that a father was to rise up against the son whom he had begotten, that a husband was to lead his wife to death rather than to indulge his love and to par-

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don impiety, in case the wife solicited him or others to forsake God. The Lord then would have all the godly to burn with so much zeal in the defence of lawful worship and true religion, that no connection, no relationship, nor any other consideration, connected with the flesh, should avail to prevent them from bringing to punishment their neighbours, when they see that God's worship is profaned, and that sound doctrine is corrupted. This was the rule prescribed by the law. Now after religion had been for a time neglected, and even trodden almost under foot, Zechariah says, that the faithful, when they shall have repented, would be endued with so much zeal for true religion, as that neither father nor mother would tolerate an ungodly error in their own son, but would lead him to punishment; for they would prefer the glory of God to flesh and blood, they would prefer to all earthly attachments that worship which ought to be more precious to us than life itself.

But it must at the same time be observed, that this zeal under the reign of Christ is approved by God; for Zechariah does not here confine what he teaches to the time of the law, but shews what would take place when Christ came, even that this zeal, which had become nearly extinct, would again burn in the hearts of all the godly. It then follows, that this law was not only given to the Jews, as some fanatics verily imagine, who would have for themselves at this day a liberty to disturb the whole world, but the same law also belongs to us: for if at this day thieves and robbers and sorcerers are justly punished, doubtless those who as far as they can destroy souls, who by their poison corrupt pure doctrine, which is spiritual food, who take away from God his own honour, who confound the whole order of the Church, doubtless such men ought not to escape unpunished. It would be indeed better to grant license to thieves and sorcerers and adulterers, than to suffer the blasphemies which the ungodly utter against God, to prevail without any punishment and without any restraint. And this is evident enough from the words of our Prophet.

And little consideration do they also show, who immediately fret from a regard to their own relatives. When

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faithful ministers and pastors are constrained to warn their people to beware of the artifices of Satan, they seek to bury every recollection of this, because it is invidious, because it leads to reproach. What if their children were to be drawn forth to punishment? How could they bear this, though they might remain at home; for they cannot attend to a free warning from their own pastor, when they find that impious errors are reproved, which we see prevailing, I say not in our neighbourhood only, but also in our own bosom and in the Church? Let them then acknowledge their own folly, that they may learn to put on new courage, so that they may make more account of the glory of God, and of the pure doctrine of religion, than of their own carnal attachments, by which they are too fast held. And this is also the reason why the Prophet says, *who have begotten him*, and he repeats it twice: nor was it in vain that God had those words expressly added, "The husband shall not suffer the wife who sleeps in his bosom to go unpunished; nor shall the father pardon his son whom he has begotten, nor the mother her own offspring, whom she has nourished, whom she has carried in her womb." (Deut. xiii. 6, 9.) All these things are said, that we may learn to forget whatever belongs to the world and to the flesh, when God's glory and purity of doctrine are to be vindicated by us.[1]

Now the Prophet shows clearly that all this is to be understood of false teachers, for he adds, *For falsehood hast thou spoken in the name of Jehovah.* And at the same time

[1] From the tenor of the preceding and the following remarks, it appears evident that *Calvin*, in common with almost all the Reformers, considered that heretics are worthy of death, and that it is the duty of the Christian public to inflict on them this punishment. The defence then which has been unwisely set up for him, is without foundation. Toleration was not understood in his day. The Papists certainly can throw no stone at him, for he only adhered to a principle which he had derived from them, and defended it with arguments which have been often used by themselves. Nor is it right for Protestants in the present day to fall foul on Calvin *alone*, since he held a principle which nearly all the Reformers maintained.

We see by what is here said how the principle was defended, that is, by borrowing what was peculiar to the old dispensation, and adding it to the New, forgetting, at the same time, the character of the gospel, that its weapons are not carnal, are not human force or power, but such as are mighty only through God to the pulling down of strongholds. "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."—*Ed.*

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the atrocity of their sin is here pointed out; for if we rightly consider what it is to speak falsehood in the name of Jehovah, it will certainly appear to us to be more detestable than either to kill an innocent man, or to destroy a guest with poison, or to lay violent hands on one's own father, or to plunder a stranger. Whatever crimes then can be thought of, they do not come up to this, that is, when God himself is involved in such a dishonour, as to be made an abettor of falsehood. What indeed can more peculiarly belong to God than his own truth? and it is his will also to be worshipped by us according to this distinction: God is truth. Now to corrupt pure doctrine—is it not the same thing, as though one substituted the devil in the place of God? or sought to transform God, so that there should be no difference between him and the devil? Hence the greatest of all crimes, as I have already said, does not come up to this horrible and monstrous wickedness. For how much does the salvation of souls exceed all the riches of the world? and then, how much more excellent is the worship of God than the fame and honours of mortals? Besides, does not religion itself, the pledge of eternal life, swallow up in a manner every thing that is sought in the world? But most sacred to us ought to be the name of God, the sanctifying of which we daily pray for. When therefore what is false is brought forward in the name of God, is not he, according to what I have already said, as it were violently forced to undertake the office of the devil, to renounce himself, and to deny that he is God?

We hence see the design of the Prophet, when he shows that there is no place for pardon, when the ungodly thus wantonly rise up to pervert pure doctrine, and so to confound all things as wholly to destroy true religion.

He adds, *Pierce him shall his father and his mother who have begotten him.* It is much harder to kill their son by their own hands than to bring him to the Judge, and to leave him to his fate. But the Prophet has taken this from the law—that so much zeal is required from the faithful, that, if it be necessary, they are to exterminate from the world such pests as deprive God of his own honour, and

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attempt to extinguish the light of true and genuine religion. It follows—

4. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive.

4. Et erit in die illa, pudefient Prophetæ, quisque à visione sua, ubi prophetaverint; et non induent vestem pilosam ut mentiantur.

Zechariah proceeds with the same subject, but in other words and in another mode of speaking, and says, that so great would be the light of knowledge, that those who had previously passed themselves as the luminaries of the Church would be constrained to be ashamed of themselves. And he farther shows how it was that so great and so gross errors had arisen, when the whole of religion had been trodden under foot, and that was because Satan had veiled the eyes and minds of all, so that they could not distinguish between black and white.

And such ignorance has been the source of all errors under the Papacy. How great has been the stupidity of that people, as they have indiscriminately admitted whatever their ungodly teachers have dared to obtrude on them? And in their bishops themselves, and in the whole band of their filthy clergy, how great a sottishness has prevailed, so that they differ nothing from asses? For artizans, and even cowherds, surpass many of the priests and many of the bishops, at least in common prudence. While then there was such ignorance in these asses, there could not have been any difference made between truth and falsehood. And then when they put on fine rings, and adorn themselves with a forked mitre and its ornaments, and also display their crook, and appear in all their pontifical splendour, the eyes of the simple are so dazzled, that all think them to be some new gods come down from heaven. Hence these prelates were beyond measure proud, until God stripped off their mask: and now their ignorance is well known, and no one among the common people is now deceived.

How then is it, that many are still immersed in their own errors? Because they wish to be so; they close their own eyes against clear light. The kings themselves, and such as

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exercise authority in the world, desire to be in their filth, and are indifferent as to any kind of abomination; for they fear lest in case of any innovation the common people should take occasion to raise tumults. As they themselves wish to remain quiet, hence it is that they defend with a diabolical pertinacity those superstitions which are abundantly proved to be so. And the people themselves neither care for God nor for their own salvation. Hence then it is, that almost all, from the least to the greatest, regard these asses, who are called prelates, as the most ignorant, and yet they submit to their tyranny. However this may be, the Lord has yet discovered the shame of those who had been a little while ago almost adored.

This is what Zechariah now declares, *Ashamed*, he says, *shall all the Prophets be in that day, every one for his own vision, when they shall have prophesied.* And the concession, of which we have spoken, is not without reason; for when the brawling monks about thirty years ago ascended their pulpits, or the prelates, who theatrically acted their holy rites, there was nothing but what was divine and from heaven. Hence with great impudence they boasted themselves to be God's messengers, his ministers, vicars, and pastors; though the name of pastors was almost mean in their esteem; but they were Christ's vicars, they were his messengers, in short, there was nothing which they dared not to claim for themselves. The Prophet ridicules this sort of pride, and seems to say, "Well, let all their trumperies be prophecies; and all their babblings, let these be for a time counted oracles: but when they shall thus prophesy, the Lord will at length *make them ashamed, every one for his vision.*"

It follows, *And they shall not wear a hairy garment that they may lie;* that is, they shall not be solicitous of retaining their honour and fame, but will readily withdraw from courting that renown which they had falsely attained. It appears from this place that Prophets wore sordid and hairy garments. Yet interpreters do not appropriately quote those passages from the Prophets where they are bidden to put on sackcloth and ashes; for Isaiah, while announcing many of

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his prophecies, did not put on sackcloth and ashes, except when he brought some sad message. The same also may be said of Jeremiah, when he was bidden to go naked. But it was a common thing with the Prophets to be content with a hairy, that is, with a sordid and mean garment. For though there is liberty allowed in external things, yet some moderation ought to be observed; for were I to teach in a military dress, it would be deemed inconsistent with common sense. There is no need of being taught as to what common decency may require. The true Prophets accustomed themselves to hairy garments in order to show that they were sparing and frugal in their clothing as well as in their diet: but they attached no sanctity to this practice, as though they acquired some eminence by their dress, like the monks at this day, who deem themselves holy on account of their hoods and other trumperies. This was not then the object of the Prophets; but only that by their dress they might show that they had nothing else in view but to serve God, and so to separate themselves from the world, that they might wholly devote themselves to their ministry. Now the false Prophets imitated them; hence Zechariah says, *they shall no more wear a hairy garment*, that is, they shall no more assume a prophetic habit.

His purpose was, not to condemn the false Prophets for wearing that sort of garment, as some have supposed, who have laid hold of this passage for the purpose of condemning long garments and whatever displeased their morose temper; but the Prophet simply means, that when purity of doctrine shall shine forth, and true religion shall attain its own honour, there will be then no place given to false teachers; for they will of themselves surrender their office, and no longer try to deceive the unwary. This is the real meaning of the Prophet: hence he says, *that they may lie.* We then see that hairy garments are condemned on account of a certain end—even that rapacious wolves might be concealed under the skin of sheep, that foxes might introduce themselves under an appearance not their own. This design, and not the clothing itself, is what is condemned by Zechariah. He afterwards adds—

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5. But he shall say, I *am* no prophet, I *am* an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

5. Et dicet, Non sum ego propheta, vir agricola ego sum; quia Adam (*vel*, homo) docuit me pastorem esse è pueritia mea.

He describes repentance in this verse more fully. When Paul wished to exhort the faithful to newness of life, he said, "Let him who has stolen, steal no more; but rather work with his own hands, that he may relieve the wants of others." (Eph. iv. 18.) Paul notices two parts of repentance,—that thieves are to refrain from acts of dishonesty and wrong,—and that they ought to labour in order to aid others and relieve their wants. So also Zechariah mentions these two particulars,—that false prophets will give up their office,—and that they will then spend their labour in doing what is right and just, supporting themselves in a lawful and innocent manner, and affording aid to their brethren.

Having spoken already of the former part, he repeats the same thing again, *I am not a prophet.* It is then the first thing in repentance, when they who had been previously the servants of Satan in the work of deception, cease to deal in falsehoods, and thus put an end to their errors. Now follows the progress,—that they who lived before in idleness and in pleasures under the pretext of sanctity, willingly devote themselves to labour, and continue no longer idle and gluttonous as before, but seek to support themselves by just and lawful employment. It would not then have been enough for him to say, *I am no prophet,* had he not added, *I am an husbandman;* that is, I am prepared to labour, that I may support myself and aid my brethren.

A half reformation might probably succeed with many at this day. Were many monks sure that a rich mess would continue to them in their cloisters, and were also the mitred bishops and abbots made certain that nothing of their gain and profit would be lost to them, they would easily grant a free course to the gospel. But the second part of reformation is very hard, which requires toil and labour: in this case the stomach has no ears, according to the old proverb. And yet we see what the Prophet says,—that those are they who truly and from the heart repent, who not only abstain

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from impostures, but who are also ready to get their own living, acknowledging that they had before defrauded the poor, and procured their support by rapine and fraud.

The Prophet no doubt speaks of impostors, who were then numerous among the Jews; and there were also women who boasted that they were favoured with a prophetic spirit; and the true prophets of God had to contend with these sorceresses or wise women, who had ever intruded themselves during a confused state of things, and undertook the office of teaching. As then there were at that time many idlers who lived on superstition, rightly does the Prophet send them away to cultivate the land. So at this day there are many brotherlings who hide their ignorance under their hood, and even all the papal clergy, under the sacred vestment, as they call it; and were they unmasked, it might easily be found out, that they are the most ignorant asses. Now, as the Lord has abundantly discovered their baseness, were they to acknowledge that they have been impostors, what would remain for them, but willingly to do what they are here taught? that is, to become husbandmen instead of being prophets.

As to the end of the verse, some retain the word Adam; others render it man; and generally the word Adam means man in Scripture. But they who think that Zechariah speaks of the first man, adduce this reason,—that as this necessity of "eating his bread by the sweat of his face" (Gen. iii. 9) was imposed on all mankind after the fall, so also all his posterity were thus taught by Adam their first parent; but this interpretation seems too far-fetched. I therefore take the word indefinitely; as though he had said, "I have not been taught by any master, so as to become capable to undertake the prophetic office; but I am acquainted only with agriculture, and have made such progress, that I can feed sheep and oxen; I am indeed by no means fit to take upon me the office of a teacher." I take the passage simply in this sense.

With regard to the verb הקנני, *ekenni*, קנה, *kene*, means to possess, to acquire; but as the word מקנה, *mekene*, which signifies a flock of sheep or cattle, is derived from this verb,

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the most learned interpreters are inclined to give this meaning, "Man has taught me to possess sheep and oxen." I am however disposed to give this rendering, as I have already stated, "Man has taught me to be a shepherd."[1]

The import of the whole is,—that when God shall discover the ignorance, which would so prevail in the Church, as that the darkness of errors would extinguish as it were all the light of true religion, then they who repent shall become so humble, as to be by no means ashamed to confess their ignorance and to testify that they had been impostors as long as they had under a false pretence assumed the office of prophets. The Spirit of God then requires here this humility from all who had been for a time immersed in the dregs of falsehood, that when they find that they are not fit to teach, they should say, "I have not been in school, I was wholly ignorant, and yet I wished to be accounted a most learned teacher; at that time the stupidity of the people veiled my disgrace: but now the light of truth hath shone upon us, which has constrained me to feel ashamed; and therefore I confess that I am not worthy to be heard in the assembly, and I am prepared to employ my hands in labour and toil, that I may gain my living, rather than to deceive men any longer, as I have hitherto done."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased to draw us at this day, by the light of thy gospel, out of that horrible darkness in which we have been miserably immersed, and to render thy face so conspicuous to us in the person of thy only-begotten Son, that nothing but our ingratitude prevents us from being transformed into thy celestial glory,—O grant, that we may make

[1] For *another* man hath possessed me from my youth.—*Newcome.*
For I have been in a state of slavery from my youth.—*Henderson.*
The latter is a very loose paraphrase; the first is the literal rendering; "another" need not have been put in. "Disclaiming all pretensions to the character of a prophet, he shall profess himself to be no other than a plain labouring man, employed in husbandry business by those whose property he had been, *quasi adstrictus glebæ*, from his youth."—*Blayney.* The line may be rendered, as proposed by *Parkhurst*,
For man has purchased me in my youth.—*Ed.*

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such advances in the light of truth, that every one of us may be ashamed of his former ignorance, and that we may freely and ingenuously confess that we were lost sheep, until we were by thy hand brought back into the way of salvation; and may we thus proceed in the course of our holy vocation, until we shall at length be all gathered into heaven, where not only that truth shall give us light, which now rules us according to the capacity of our flesh, but where also shall shine on us the splendour of thy glory, and shall render us conformable to thine image, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-fourth.

6. And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.

6. Et dicit ad eum, Quid plagæ istæ inter manus tuas? et dicet, Quia percussus sum in domo amicorum meorum.

Here the Prophet, in order to finish what we explained yesterday, says that such would be the discipline among the new people after having repented, that each in his own house would chastise his sons and relatives: and it is an evidence of perfect zeal, when not only judges perform their office in correcting wickedness, but when also private individuals assist to preserve public order, each according to his power. It is indeed true that the use of the sword is not allowed us, so that the offender may be punished by his neighbour: but as it was always allowed by the law of God, that when the matter did not come before a public tribunal, friends might inflict punishment, Zechariah, alluding to this custom, says, that though they who unjustly claimed the prophetic office and spread abroad false and impious errors, should not be visited with capital punishment, yet such would be their zeal for true religion, that friends would privately chastise such as they found to be of this character.

If any one objects and says, that these two things are inconsistent,—that false Prophets were punished with death, and that they were only chastised with stripes or scourges. To this I answer, that Zechariah does not speak precisely of the kind and mode of punishment, but says generally, that false teachers, even in the estimation of their parents, were

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worthy of death; and that if they were treated more gently they should yet suffer such a punishment, that they would through life be mutilated and ever bear scars as proofs of their shame.

We may at the same time gather from the answer what proves true repentance *Say will* one, (it is put indefinitely,) or it will be said, *What mean these wounds in thine hands? Then he will say, I have been stricken by my friends.* The Prophet shows that those who had previously deceived the people would become new men, so as patiently to bear correction; though it might seem hard when the hands are wounded and pierced, yet he says that the punishment, which was in itself severe, would yet be counted mild, for they would be endued with such meekness as willingly to bear to be corrected. Some apply this to Christ, because Zechariah has mentioned wounds on the hands; but this is very puerile; for it is quite evident that he speaks here of false teachers, who had for a time falsely pretended God's name. As then they say, that they were friends by whom they were smitten, they acknowledge themselves worthy of such punishment, and they murmur not, nor set up any complaint.[1] It now follows—

7. Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts:	7. Gladie, (*vel*, framea,) expergiscere super pastorem meum, et super virum socium meum, dicit Iehova

[1] This verse may be thus rendered—

When *one* shall say to him,
"Why *are* these wounds in thine hands?"
Then he will say,
"Because I have been smitten at home by my friends," *or* by my lovers, מאהבי

Grotius, *Blayney*, and *Henderson*, consider the "wounds" or stripes, punctures or marks, to have been those made in honour of some idol, and ascribed to friends for the purpose of escaping punishment: but the obvious meaning is that stated by *Calvin*,—that they were the wounds inflicted by the nearest relatives, particularly mentioned in the 3d verse, "and pierce him shall his father and his mother," &c. *Marckius*, *Adam Clarke*, and *Henderson*, agree with *Calvin* in repudiating the notion that this verse is to be understood of the crucifixion of our Saviour,—a notion commonly entertained by Papal expositors: but *Henry* and *Scott* refer to the sentiment without condemning or approving it. Both *Jerome* and *Theodoret* refer, as it is done here, to the punishment inflicted by the parents; and it is strange that any sound expounder could do otherwise. —*Ed.*

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smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

exercituum; percute pastorem, et dispergentur oves; et reducam manum meam super parvulos.

It was pleasant and delightful to hear what the Prophet said at the beginning of the chapter, for he promised that a fountain would be opened, by which the Jews might cleanse away all their filth, and that God, having been reconciled, would be bountiful to them. As then he had promised so blessed and happy a state, what he had said before might have been so taken, even by the true and faithful servants of God, as though the condition of the Church were to be after that time free from every trouble and inconvenience; hence Zechariah anticipates such a conclusion, and shows that the happy state which he had promised was not to be so looked for, as though the faithful were to be free from every affliction, for God would in the meantime severely try his Church. Though then God had promised to be bountiful to his Church, he yet shows that many troubles would be mixed up with its prosperity, in order that the faithful might prepare themselves to endure all things.

This discourse may indeed appear abrupt, but its different parts harmonise well together, for God so regulates his benefits which he bestows on his Church in this world, as ever to try it in various ways. What is here said was especially necessary, since very grievous afflictions were nigh at hand: for, as it is evident from history, that nation was on the borders of despair when the coming of Christ approached. This then is the reason why the Prophet seems at the first view to join together things so contrary. For what he has hitherto promised tended to prepare the faithful to bear all things patiently, inasmuch as deliverance was nigh. But in the meantime it was needful that they should be expressly encouraged to persevere, lest they should succumb under the extreme evils which were not far distant.

The sum of the whole is, that before the Lord would cleanse his Church and bring it back to perfect order, very grievous calamities were to intervene, for a dreadful disorder there must be when God smites the very shepherds; and the apostrophe, when God addresses the sword, a thing void

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of reason, is very emphatical. It is much more striking than if he had said, "A sword shall be raised against my shepherds and against my ministers, so that the flock shall be dispersed." But the metaphor, as I said, is much more expressive, when God directs his words to the sword itself; *Awake*, watch, *O sword*,—how? *against my shepherd.*

Most of our interpreters confine this passage to the person of Christ, because in Matth. xxvi. 31, this sentence is quoted, "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered:" but this is no solid reason; for what is said of a single shepherd ought probably to be extended to the whole order. When God says in Deut. xviii. 15, "A prophet will I raise up from the midst of you," though mention is indeed made of one Prophet only, yet God includes all the Prophets; as though he had said, "I will never deprive you of the doctrine of salvation, but in every age will I show that I care for you, for my Prophets shall be ever present, by whose mouth I shall make it known that I am near you." This passage is quoted as referring to Christ, and very suitably, because all the Prophets spoke by his Spirit, and at length he himself appeared, and by his mouth the heavenly Father spoke familiarly with us, and fully explained his whole mind, as it is said in the first chapter to the Hebrews, "In various ways and often did God speak formerly to the fathers by the Prophets, but now in these last times by his only-begotten Son." As then Christ possesses a supremacy among the Prophets, and hence rightly applied to him are the words of Moses; so also as he is the head and prince of shepherds, this pre-eminence justly belongs to him. But what is said by the Prophet is however to be viewed as a general truth. In short, God threatens the people, and declares that there would be a dreadful disorder; for they would be deprived of their shepherds, so that there would be no government among them, or one in great confusion.

The word עמית, *omit*, is rendered by some, kindred, (*contribulis*—one of the same tribe,) by others, kinsman, (*consanguineus*—one of the same blood,) and by others, one connected, (*co-hærens*,) that is, with God; and they have considered that this passage cannot be understood of any but

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of Christ alone: but they have taken up, as I have said, a false principle. The Greek version has citizen (*τὸν πολίτην,*) and some render it, as Theodotion, kindred (*σύμφυλον*—one of the same tribe.) Jerome prefers the rendering, one connected or united with me (*cohærentem mihi.*)[1] The word, according to the Hebrews, means an associate, a neighbour, or a friend, or one in any way connected with us. God, I have no doubt, distinguished pastors with this title, because he gave a representation of himself by them to the people; and the more eminent any one is, the nearer, we know, he is to God: and hence kings and judges, and such as exercise authority, are called his sons. So also pastors are called his associates, for they spend their labour in building up the Church. He is the chief Pastor, but he employs his ministers to carry on his work. This is the reason why they are called the associates of God, that is, on account of the connection between them, for they are co-workers with God, as Paul also teaches us. In short, the Prophet calls pastors the associates of God in the same sense in which Paul calls them fellow-workers. (*συνεργους*, 1 Cor. iii. 9.)

Having said that the sword was permitted, nay, commanded, to rise against the shepherd, he immediately adds, that *the sheep were dispersed.* We then see that in these words is set forth a calamity that was to be feared, and which the people were not able to escape, in order that the faithful might not be too much disheartened, as though God would disappoint them, but that they might stand firm amidst grievous troubles and violent commotions. Since

[1] Much has been written about this word, but unnecessarily. It occurs about nine times in Leviticus, and nowhere else but here, and is rendered "neighbour," and, "one another." Lev. vi. 2; xviii. 20, &c. "Against the man who is near into me," is *Newcome's* version; *Henderson's* is, "who is united to me;" and *Blayney* paraphrases the two words thus, "him that is next to me in favour and authority," conceiving that the word גבר, is not simply a man, but one superior to others in strength, power, or authority." To deduce from this word an argument in favour of our Lord's divinity seems an over-strained criticism. A neighbour, it is true, is one of the same nature with ourselves, but he is also a member of the same society, and of a similar station in the community, on which account he is especially called a neighbour. The view that *Calvin* takes of the word, is no doubt the correct one; and the same is taken by *Newcome*, *Archbishop Secker*, and *Blayney*.

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then this disorder was nigh, Zechariah bids the faithful to continue firm and patiently, and quietly hope, until God showed himself again propitious to them, and those evidences of his favour appeared of which he had before spoken. We now see what the design of the Prophet was. But we must especially notice, that it is a sure presage of the people's ruin and destruction when pastors are taken from them; for when God intends to keep us safe, he employs this instrumentality, that is, he raises up faithful teachers, who rule in his name; and he rules them by his Spirit, and fits them for their rank and station: but when he strikes them, he not only forsakes the people, but also shows that he is the avenger of wickedness, so that the people themselves are destroyed. This is the import of the Prophet's words.

But this, as I have already observed, was fulfilled in Christ; for he accommodated the passage to himself when his disciples fled from him. Though they were but a small flock, being very few in number, yet they were scattered and put to flight. In that case then, as in a mirror, appeared how truly it had been said by Zechariah, that the scattering is nigh when a pastor is smitten.

By the word *sword*, he means affliction; for though Christ was not slain by a sword, yet crucifixion and violent death are fitly designated by the word sword.

It follows at the end of the verse, *And I will turn my hand to the little ones.* Some consider that the little ones would be exposed to many evils, because the Lord would ever hold his rod in his hand to chastise them. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, meant what is far different,—that God would show mercy to them, when the body of the people had been as it were torn into many parts. For all the godly might have been wholly dejected when their shepherds were taken away, and when the people were become like a straying flock. God then comes to their aid, and testifies that his hand would be extended over the miserable and the poor ones, who had been almost overwhelmed by a mass of evils.

This passage is also very serviceable to us in the present state of the Church: for we see how God has lately cut off

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many pastors, so that what is called the Church is become like a mutilated body. We also see that God often deprives of good and faithful pastors those who have abused his truth, or with impious contempt rejected it. We might then in this case be terrified and cast off all hope of salvation, were we not to remember what Zechariah teaches us here, even that though the Church were contemptible in the world, and though the faithful were few in number, and all of them exposed to calamities, yet God's hand will be over them, so as to gather for himself again a Church from the torn members. This is the import of the whole. It follows—

8. And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; but the third shall be left therein.

8. Et erit in tota terra, dicit Iehova, portio duæ (*vel*, duorum) in ea excidentur, morientur, et tertia residua erit in ea.

He goes on with the same subject; for he reminds the faithful, that though God had resolved to restore his Church, and though his blessing would be evident, yet very heavy afflictions were not far distant; as though he had said, "God will give you a serene heaven and a bland air, that the land may bring forth its fruit; but still there is a heavy tempest impending, and ye shall not be exempt from storms and hail. But when God has laid waste a part of the land, he will bless you with corn and wine, so that you shall have sufficient support." So also in this place he says, "God will protect his Church, and will also be propitious to it, for he will wash away all the filth of wickedness, and will give to you faithful pastors, when he has removed the impostures of Satan: but in the meantime most grievous afflictions await you, and a hard state of things, and difficult to be borne, must be expected; for God will appear as though he intended to destroy his people: such will be the scattering."

For this reason he says, that there will be through the whole land the most grievous calamities: *Two parts*, he says, *shall die; the third only shall remain.*

We now see how all these things agree, and how the Prophet's words harmonize. In short, he means, that what he had before promised respecting the future favour of God,

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does not belong indifferently to all, or to the whole body of the people, but to the faithful, whom God will in a wonderful manner deliver from ruin; for of the people God will only save the third part, as he had already resolved to destroy the other two parts. The intention of the Prophet is now by no means doubtful.

But we hence conclude, that what God daily promises to his Church is not to be extended indiscriminately to all, for many falsely profess his name: but he knows his own, as Paul says, and therefore exhorts them to depart from iniquity. (2 Tim. ii. 16.) Let us then know that promises of God's favour do not appertain to hypocrites: for though he has decreed to deal kindly and graciously with his Church, he yet continues to diminish it, so that the third part only remains safe. Whenever then we speak of God's mercy towards his Church, and of his aid and help, let us ever bear in mind the cleansing of which Zechariah now speaks, that God will reserve the third part, while the greater portion ever runs headlong into ruin. It is then enough that the third part should be delivered from destruction. But this verse, as it has already appeared, ought to be applied to the kingdom of Christ.

Literally we read, *the mouth of the two;* but פִּי, *pi*, is to be taken metaphorically for part or portion. A part then of the two in it, or *two parts in it*, (the plural is joined with the singular, as often is the case,) *shall perish, shall be cut off.* The verb כָּרַת, *caret*, means to cut off; and then גָּוַע, *guo*, signifies to die or to sink. Though he understands the same things by the two words, it is not yet an unmeaning repetition; for it might have seemed hard and unreasonable that only a third part of God's people should remain. This diminution of the Church might have disturbed the minds of many, and might have appeared incredible: hence the Prophet, in order to confirm what in itself seemed a paradox, says, they *shall die*, they *shall perish;* it has been so decreed, and you are not to contend with God; for given up to ruin shall the greater number be, while a few only shall remain: *the third part* then *shall remain in it.* It follows—

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9. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people; and they shall say, The Lord *is* my God.

9. Et ducam (*vel*, venire faciam) tertiam partem per ignem; et conflabo eos sicuti conflatur argentum: et examinabo eos sicuti probatur aurum: ipse invocabit nomen meum, et ego respondebo ei; et dixi, (*vel*, dicam,) populus meus est; et ipse dicet, Iehova Deus meus.

Zechariah proceeds further here, that when God shall cut off two parts of the people, he will yet save the third for this end—that it might be proved by various kinds of trials, and be made to bear many afflictions. With regard to the two parts, the Lord did not afflict them in order to turn them to repentance, but resolved wholly to destroy them. The third part then is reserved for salvation; and yet it is necessary even for them to be cleansed through many afflictions.

Very useful is this doctrine; for we hence first conclude that many, not only from the world, are led into perdition, but also from the bosom of the Church: for when three hundred shall profess to worship God, one hundred only, says Zechariah, will be saved. There are always among the people many hypocrites; nay, the grains lie hid in the midst of much chaff and refuse; it is therefore necessary to devote to ruin and eternal death a larger number than those who shall be saved. Let us then not envy the ungodly, though their prosperity may disturb us and cause us to grieve. (Ps. xxxvii. 2.) We think them happy; for while God spares and supports them, they deride us and triumph over our miseries. But under this circumstance, the Holy Spirit exhorts us to bear patiently our afflictions; for though for a time the happiness of the ungodly may goad us, yet God himself declares that they are fattened in order to be presently slain, when they shall have gathered much fatness. This is one thing.

Then it is in the second place added, that after the greater part, both of the world and of the Church, (at least such as profess to belong to it,) shall be destroyed, we cannot be retained in our position, except God often chastises us. Let us then remember what Paul says, that we are chastised by the Lord, that we may not perish with the world; and the

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metaphors which the Prophet adopts here are to the same purpose; for he says, *I will lead them through the fire.* He speaks here of the faithful whom God has chosen into salvation, and whom he has reserved that they might continue safe: yet he says, that they shall be saved through fire, that is, hard trials. But he sets forth this still more clearly, *He will prove them,* he says, *as silver and gold.*[1] The stubble and the chaff, as John the Baptist teaches us, are indeed cast into the fire, (Matt. iii. 12,) but without any benefit; for the fire consumes the refuse and the chaff, and whatever is corruptible. But when the gold and the silver are put in the fire and are purified, it is done that greater purity may be produced, and also that what is precious in these metals may become more apparent: for when the silver is drawn out of the mine, it differs not much from what is earthy. The same is the case with gold. But the furnace so purifies the gold and silver from their dross, that they attain their value and excellency. Hence Zechariah says, that when God casts his faithful people into the fire, he does this according to his paternal purpose in order to burn out their dross, and thus they become gold and silver who were before filthy and abominable, and in whom much dross abounded. We see then that the elect of God, even those who may be rightly counted his children, are here distinguished from the reprobate, however they may profess God's name and worship.

Now this passage is not inconsistent with that in Isaiah, "I have not purified thee as silver and gold, for thou hast been wholly consumed." (Is. xlviii. 10.) Though God tries his elect by the fire of afflictions, he yet observes moderation; for they would wholly faint were he to purify them to the quick. It is however necessary to pass through this

[1] I would render the first lines of this verse thus—

And I will bring the third part into the fire,
And will purify them as he who purifies silver,
or, as the purifier of silver,
And will try them as he who tries gold,
or, as the trier of gold.

The participle following "as" I regard as active, and not passive, as made by the Punctuists.—*Ed.*

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trial of which the Prophet now speaks: and thus the state of the Church is here described—that it ought to be always and continually cleansed, for we are altogether unclean; and then, after God has washed us by his Spirit, still many spots of uncleanness remain in us; besides, we contract other pollutions, for it cannot be but that much contagion is derived from those vices by which we are on every side surrounded.

He now adds, *He will call on my name, and I will answer him.*[1] With this consideration God mitigates what was in itself hard and grievous. It is hard to see so many dreadful evils, when God treads under foot the greater part of the world, and when his vengeance bursts forth on the Church itself, so that his severity on every side fills us with fear. But this also is added—that we are daily to feel the fire, as though God meant to burn us, while yet he does not consume us. Hence the Prophet shows how these miseries are to be sweetened to us, and how sorrow becomes not too grievous; for we are tried by the cross and the scourges and chastisements of God in order that we may call on his name. Hearing follows calling; and nothing can be more desirable than this. The Prophet then proves from the happy effect, that there is no reason for the faithful to murmur against God, or impatiently to bear their evils, because being purified they can now really flee to him.

Were any to ask, whether God can by his Spirit only draw the elect to true religion? If so, why is this fire of affliction and hard trial necessary? The answer is, that he speaks

[1] The singular number "he," or rather "it," refers to "the third part" at the beginning of the verse. *Henderson* renders these lines literally, "It shall invoke my name," &c. According to our version and *Newcome*, this is partly done. It would be better in a translation to adopt the plural throughout—

They shall call on my name,
And I will answer them;
And I will say, "My people are they;"
And they will say, "Jehovah is our God."

There is a conversive ו wanting before "say" in the third line, for the verb is in the past tense; it is supplied by the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*. Here is an instance of manifest omission, not supplied by any MSS., but by the early versions.—*Ed.*

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not here of what God can do, nor ought we to dispute on the subject, but be satisfied with what he has appointed. It is his will then, that his own people should pass through the fire and be tried by various afflictions, for this purpose—that they may sincerely call on his name. We must at the same time learn that it is the true preparation by which the Lord brings back the elect to himself, and forms in them a sincere concern for religion, when he tries them by the cross and by various chastisements; for prosperity is like mildew or the rust. We cannot then look to God with clear eyes, except our eyes be cleansed. But this cleansing, as I have said, is what God has appointed as the means by which he has resolved to render his Church submissive. It is therefore necessary that we should be subject, from first to last, to the scourges of God, in order that we may from the heart call on him; for our hearts are enfeebled by prosperity, so that we cannot make the effort to pray. But this consolation is ever to be applied to ease our sorrows, when our flesh leads us either to perverseness or to despair; let this remedy occur to us, that though chastisement is hard while it is felt, it ought yet to be estimated by what it produces, as the Apostle also reminds us in Heb. xii. 11. Let us especially know that the name of God is then seriously invoked, when we are subdued, and all ferocity, and all the indulgence of the flesh, are corrected in us: for we are like untamed heifers, as Jeremiah says, when God indulges us. (Jer. l. 10.) Hence the discipline of the cross is necessary, so that earnest prayer may become vigorous in us.

He shows at last how God may be invoked, for we are taught that he will be kind and propitious to us, whenever called upon. It would not indeed be enough for us to groan under the burden of afflictions, and to be thus awakened to prayer, except God himself allured us and gave us hope of favour. Hence the Prophet adds, *I will say, My people they are; and they will say, Jehovah our God is he.* The Prophet in short means, that unless the promises of God shine on us, and invite us to prayer, no sincere prayer can ever be drawn from us. How so? Because we first come to God by faith alone, and this opens the gate to us, and all prayers not

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founded on faith are rejected; and further, we know that men naturally dread the presence of God, and will do so until he gives them a taste of his goodness and love. Hence what Zechariah says here is especially worthy of notice,—that God's word precedes, so that we may follow with confidence, and be able to enter through the gate opened to prayer, for except he first says, "ye are my people," we cannot claim the privilege of entering into his presence and say, "thou art our God." For who hath bound God to us, that he should be a God to us? even he himself; for he hath bound himself to us when he promised that we shall be his people. There is then, as I have said, no right beginning to prayer until we are taught that God is ready to hear our prayers, as it is said in Ps. lxv. 23, "Thou God hearest prayers, and all flesh shall come to thee."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest that we are full of so many sinful desires, which defile whatever purity thou hast conferred on us by thy Spirit,—O grant, that we may daily profit under thy scourges, and so submit ourselves to be ruled by thee, as to become resigned and obedient, even when thou dealest with us with unusual severity; and may we ever taste of the sweetness of thy goodness in thy greatest rigour, and know that thou thereby providest for our safety, and leadest us towards perfect purity, from which we are as yet far distant, so that we may be obedient to thee in this world, and become hereafter partakers of that victory which Christ has procured for us, and enjoy with him his triumph in thy heavenly kingdom.—Amen.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-fifth.

1. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

2. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

1. Ecce dies venit Iehovæ, et dividentur spolia tua in medio tui.

2. Et congregabo omnes gentes contra Ierusalem in prœlium, et capietur urbs, et diripientur domus; mulieres stuprabuntur; et exibit dimidia pars urbis in exilium, et residuum populi non excidetur ex urbe.

ZECHARIAH pursues the same subject as in the preceding chapter: for having promised a joyful and happy state to the faithful, who despising their indulgences in Chaldea had returned to their own country, he now reminds them that their peaceful condition in Judea would not be without many trials and troubles; and therefore he exhorts them to patience, lest they should faint in their adversities, and repent of their return.

Some apply this chapter to the time of Antichrist, some refer it to the last day, others explain it of the destruction of the city which happened in the reign of Vespasian; but I doubt not but that the Prophet meant here to include the calamities which were near at hand, for the city had not yet been built,[1] the Jews having been much harassed by their neighbours; and we also know how atrocious was the tyranny which Antiochus exercised: in short, there was a continued series of evils from the time the city and the temple began to be built till the coming of Christ. As then the Jews, who had preferred foreign countries to their own, might have boasted of their lot and despised their brethren, as though they had foolishly and thoughtlessly removed from foreign lands, and had been too precipitate in returning, God designed to declare by the mouth of Zechariah what evils

[1] This was not done till the time of Nehemiah, who returned to Judea about ninety years after the first return under Zerubbabel, and several years, probably thirty or forty, after the date of this prophecy.—*Ed.*

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were at hand, that the faithful might with a courageous mind be prepared to undergo their trials, and that they might never succumb under any evils, for the Lord had promised more to them than what they could have attained in Chaldea and other countries. Having now explained the meaning of the Prophet, I shall come to the words.[1]

Behold, he says, *the day shall come to Jehovah, and divided shall be thy spoils in the midst* of the city. By the demonstrative particle *Behold,* the certainty of the prophecy, as it has been elsewhere said, is intimated; for the Prophet points out as by the finger what could not yet be comprehended by human minds. And he says, that *the day would come to Jehovah,* that they might know that they would suffer a just punishment when the Lord treated them in this manner; for men, we know, indulge themselves and seek pleasures, and when God seems not to deal kindly with them, they raise a clamour as though he were too severe. Hence the Prophet reminds them, that so great a calamity would not come without a cause, for God would then execute his judgment. He does not expressly describe it, but he speaks as though he summoned them before God's tribunal. Now when we understand that we have to do with God, it avails

[1] *Dathius* truly says, that interpreters have toiled much in the explanation of this chapter, some taking the words in a spiritual sense, others maintaining that what is here said was fulfilled before the coming of Christ, and a third party holding that all is as yet unfulfilled. He was disposed on the whole to assent to the opinion of *Grotius,* the same in part with that of *Calvin,*—that this prophecy, as well as some in the preceding chapters, were fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees. See 1 Macc. vi. 26, &c. He indeed admits that this theory does not remove all the difficulties, but leaves less than any other.

Marckius doubted not but that the beginning of this chapter is a prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and he quotes *Jerome, Cyril,* and *Theodoret* as having expressed the same opinion. *Lowth, Scott, Adam Clarke,* and *Henderson* take the same view. But the sequel of this chapter may be better explained by the events which followed the attacks of the Greco-Syrian kings on Jerusalem, (see 2 Macc. iv.,) than by the events which followed the ruin of that city by the Romans. *Blayney* viewed the contents of this chapter, and much of what is found in the preceding chapters, as yet unfulfilled: and so does *Newcome* in part.

Henry is doubtful whether this chapter and the preceding are to be understood of the whole period from the Prophet's days to the days of the Messiah, or to some events during that time, or to Christ's coming and the setting up of his kingdom upon the ruins of the Jewish polity. *Ed.*

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us nothing to murmur. It is then better to be silent when God is set forth as being in the midst of us, for it is certain that he will not in chastising us exceed what is just.

But here is described a hard affliction; for Zechariah intimates that the city would be exposed to the will of enemies, so that they would divide at pleasure their spoils in the very midst of it. What conquerors snatch away, they afterwards in private divide among themselves; and we know that many cities have been plundered, when yet the conquerors have not dared to expose to view their spoils. But the Prophet means here that there would be no strength in the Jews to prevent their enemies from dividing the spoils at their leisure in the midst of the city.

He afterwards adds, *I will gather all nations against Jerusalem.* He confirms what I have already said, that God would be the author of those calamities, and thus he puts a restraint on the Jews, that they might not expostulate with him respecting the severity of their punishment. He then shortly intimates, that the nations would not come by chance to attack Jerusalem; and that whatever commotions would arise, they could not be ascribed to chance or to fortune, or to the purposes of men, but to the decree of heaven. He then bids them to look to God, that they might humble themselves under his mighty hand, according to what Peter also does. (1 Pet. v. 6.) He might have said in a briefer manner, "All the nations shall conspire;" but he ascribes this to God, and says, that he will bring them, like a prince, who collects an army, which he commands to fight under his banner. And by naming *all nations*, he reminds them that their trials would not be light; for such would be the union of enemies, and so large would be their number, that Jerusalem would be brought nigh to utter ruin. But afterwards he subjoins a consolation to moderate the grievousness of that calamity: yet he says first—

Taken shall be the city, plundered shall be the houses, and the women shall be ravished. What usually happens to a city taken by storm, the citizens of Jerusalem, the Prophet says, would have to endure. It is indeed an extreme outrage, when women are ravished by enemies; and then,

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poverty is often more grievous than death; and yet he says, that when deprived of their substance they would have to witness an outrage more hard to be borne than death itself, because their women would be subjected to such a disgrace.

He adds, *that half part of the city would depart.* He had said before that a third part only would be saved; but he now seems to be inconsistent with himself. But as to number we need not anxiously enquire, as I have elsewhere reminded you; for the Prophets often mention half part and then the third, when yet they mean the same thing. It is the same as though he had said, that the destruction would be so great, that hardly half of them would remain alive.

Now follows the consolation which I have mentioned,—that the *residue of the people would not be exterminated from the city.* By these words the Prophet teaches them, that though hard would be the condition of the city, as it would be reduced nearly to a waste, yet they who having returned to their country sincerely worshipped God, would be blessed; for the Church would ever remain safe, and that how much soever God might lessen the number, yet a part of the Church, however small, would be kept safe. The object then of the Prophet is to comfort the faithful, that they might sustain whatever evils might be at hand, and look for what God promises, even that a Church would again emerge, and that God would really prove that Jerusalem was not in vain his sanctuary, where he would bless the remnant which escaped, and escaped through his wonderful favour. He afterwards adds—

3. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

3. Et egredietur Iehova, pugnabit contra gentes istas, sicut die quo prœliatus est in die prœlii.

Zechariah here amplifies the favour of God,—that he will go forth openly, and avowedly carry on war against all the enemies of Jerusalem. It was not indeed a small mitigation of their evils, that a part of the Church would be saved. But the Prophet declares here what is still far better,—that when God afflicted his Church, and suffered it to be violently assailed by enemies, he would become at

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length the avenger of all the wrongs they might have done. We know how we are wounded and tried, when God gives loose reins to the ungodly, and when they grow wanton in their wickedness and triumph, insult God, and almost spit as it were at the very clouds. When therefore the ungodly thus petulantly exult, and God in the meantime hides himself and is still, it is difficult to wait patiently for the issue. Hence the Prophet promises that God will become the avenger, after having allowed his Church to be for a time chastised by ungodly and wicked enemies.

Go forth, he says, *shall Jehovah*. We know the meaning of this metaphorical expression. The Prophets sometimes extend the phrase, "Go forth shall God from his holy place," as though they said—that the Jews would find by experience that God's name is not invoked in vain in his temple, and that it has not been said in vain, that God is seated between the cherubims. But the Prophet seems here to speak of God generally, as going forth armed from his recesses to resist the enemies of his Church. *Go forth* then *shall God;* for he had for a time concealed his power. In a like manner, we know that God hides his face from us when he brings us no help, and when we also think that we are neglected by him. As then God, as long as he hides his power, seems to be without power, hence the Prophet says here, *Go forth shall Jehovah*, and *he will fight against these nations*.

By these words he intimates, that there is no reason for the faithful to envy their enemies, even when all things go on prosperously with them; for they will at length find that they cannot injure the Church without God undertaking its cause, according to what he has promised, "I will be an enemy to thine enemies." (Ex. xxiii. 22.) But as this is a thing difficult to be believed, he calls to mind ancient history,—

As in the day, he says, *in which he fought in the day of battle*. Some confine this part to the passage through the Red Sea; but I think that Zechariah includes all the instances which God had given to the Jews to prove that they were the objects of his care. God then, not only once, not

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at one time, nor in one manner, had put forth his power, that the Jews might plainly see that they became conquerors through his aid. This is what Zechariah means. He in effect says, "Both you and your fathers have long ago found that God is wont to fight for his Church; for he has honoured you with innumerable victories; you have been often overwhelmed with despair, and his favour unexpectedly shone upon you, and delivered you beyond all that you hoped for: you had often to contend with the strongest enemies; they were put to flight, even when ye were wholly unequal to them in number, and yet God bestowed upon you easy victories. Since then God has so often and in such divers ways cast down your enemies, why should you not hope for the same aid still from him?"

We hence see why the Prophet now refers to the ancient battles of God, even that he might by facts confirm the Jews in their hope, and that they might not doubt but that God was endued with power sufficiently strong to subdue all the ungodly, for he loses none.

And he adds, *in the day of battle*, even when there is need of help from heaven. He indeed calls it the day of engagement or contest, for so the word קְרָב, *koreb*, properly means. When therefore it was necessary for God to engage with enemies, then his power appeared: "There is hence no reason for you hereafter to doubt, but that he will still prevail against your enemies." We know that this mode of speaking is frequently and commonly used by the Prophets, that is, when they adduce examples of God's favour and power, by which he has proved that there is in him alone sufficient help for the deliverance of his Church.

It behoves us now to apply to ourselves what is here said, for Zechariah did not only speak for the men of his age, or for those of the next generation, but he intended to furnish the Church with confidence till the end of the world, so that the faithful might not faint under any trials. Whenever then the ungodly prevail, and no hope shines on us, let us remember how often and by what various means God has wonderfully delivered his Church as it were from death; for it was not his purpose only once to help and aid his own

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people, but also to animate us, that we at this day may not despond, when we endure evils with which the fathers formerly struggled. He then adds—

4. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

4. Et stabunt pedes ejus in die illa super montem Olivarum, qui est è regione Ierusalem ab Oriente; et scindetur mons Olivarum à dimidia parte sui ab Oriente ad Occidentem (*vel*, versus Orientem et Occidentem) vallis magna valdè; et discedet dimidia pars montis ad Aquilonem, et dimidia pars ejus ad Meridiem.

He continues the same subject, that God's power would be then conspicuous in putting enemies to flight. He indeed illustrates here his discourse by figurative expressions, as though he wished to bring the Jews to see the scene itself; for the object of the personification is no other but that the faithful might set God before them as it were in a visible form; and thus he confirms their faith, as indeed it was necessary; for as we are dull and entangled in earthly thoughts, our minds can hardly rise up to heaven, though the Lord with a clear voice invites us to himself. The Prophet then, in order to aid our weakness, adds a vivid representation, as though God stood before their eyes.

Stand, he says, *shall his feet on the mount of Olives.* He does not here promise a miracle, such as even the ignorant might conceive to be literal; nor does he do this in what follows, when he says, *The mount shall be rent, and half of it shall turn to the east and half to the west.*[1] This has

[1] "This sign," [God's feet standing on the mount,] says *Kimchi*, "is a type of the clearing of the Gentiles who came against Jerusalem, and who shall fall scattered about." The *Targum* gives this paraphrase, "He shall be revealed in his power." "The rending," says *Drusius*, "signifies the flight of the nations, who, on finding God fighting against them, shall flee away in all directions: so that the mountain on which the besiegers fixed their camp shall seem as though divided into parts." *Theodoret's* language is to the same purpose; he regarded the mountain as symbolic of the enemies assembled against the city—ἔρος καλεῖ τὴν φάλαγγα τῶν πολεμίων, &c.

Marckius's view of the text is as follows: This mountain rendered access on the east to the city and temple difficult, and intercepted the morning light and the flowing of waters in that direction, both which are

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never happened, that mount has never been rent: but as the Prophet could not, under those grievous trials, which might have overwhelmed the minds of the godly a hundred times, have extolled the power of God as much as the exigency of the case required without employing a highly figurative language, he therefore accommodates himself, as I have said, to the capacity of our flesh.

The import of the whole is,—that God's power would be so remarkable in the deliverance of his Church, as though God manifested himself in a visible form and reviewed the battle from the top of the mountain, and gave orders how everything was to be done.

He says first, *Stand shall his feet on the mount of Olives.* Why does he not rather say, "In the city itself?" Even because he meant by this mode of speaking to show, that God would watch, that he might see what would be necessary for the deliverance of his Church. All these things, I know, are explained allegorically,—that Christ appeared on the mount of Olives, when he ascended into heaven, and also, that the mount was divided, that it might be passable, and that the apostles might proceed into the various parts of the world, in order that they might assail all the nations: but these are refinements, which, though they please many, have yet nothing solid in them, when they are by any one properly considered. I then take a simpler view of what the Prophet says,—that God's hand would be sufficiently conspicuous, whenever his purpose was to aid his miserable and afflicted Church.

The same view is to be taken of what follows, that a *great valley* would be in the middle, for the rent would be one half *towards the north* and the other half *towards the south.* It is the same thing as though he had said, that Jerusalem was as it were concealed under that mountain, so that it was

referred to afterwards in verses 7 and 8. God's descent on this mountain was a sign of his great displeasure with that nation, and the rending of the mountain was emblematic of a way being made open for the gospel to spread throughout the world. And he regarded the Lord's coming in the next verse as his coming in the ministration of the gospel to render it successful through the world by means of his saints, his apostles, and ministers.—*Ed.*

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hid, but that afterwards it would be on an elevated place, as it is said elsewhere, "Elevated shall be the mountain of the Lord," say both Isaiah and Micah, "above all mountains." (Is. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1.) That hill, we know, was small; and yet Isaiah and Micah promise such a height as will surpass almost the very clouds. What does this mean? Even that the glory of the God of Jerusalem will be so great, that his temple will be visible above all other heights. So also in this place, *Rent*, he says, *shall be the mount of Olives*, so that Jerusalem may not be as before in a shaded valley, and have only a small hill on one side, but that it may be seen far and wide, so that all nations may behold it. This, as I think, is what the Prophet simply means. But those who delight in allegories must seek them from others. It now follows—

5. And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, *and* all the saints with thee.

5. Et fugietis in vallem montium (*vel*, per vallem,) quia pertinget vallis montium ad Azal (*alii vertunt*, ad proximum; *alii* ad excelsum;) et fugietis sicuti fugistis à facie motus diebus Uziæ regis Iehudah; et veniet Iehova, Deus meus; omnes sancti tecum.

The Prophet says again, that God's presence would be terrible, so that it would put to flight all the Jews; for though God promises to be the deliverer of his chosen people, yet as there were still mixed with them hypocrites, his language varies. But we must further observe, that though the Lord may appear for our deliverance, it yet cannot be but that his majesty will strike us with fear; for the flesh must be humbled before God. What the Prophet then says is the same as though he had said, that the coming of God, which he had just mentioned, would be fearful to all, not only to open enemies whom he would come to destroy, but also to the faithful, though they knew that he would put forth his power to save them. And thus the Prophet seems to reason from the less to the greater; for if the faithful, who look anxiously for God, yet tremble and quake at his presence, what must happen to his enemies, who know that he is against them? As then the Prophet bids here the

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faithful to be prepared reverently to look for God, so also he shows that he will be dreadful to all the ungodly, in order that the elect might not hesitate to flee to his aid and to rely on him.

Flee, he says, *shall ye through the valley of the mountains.* Some imagine this to have been a valley so called, because it was of long extent, stretching through chains of mountains; but we read nothing of this in Scripture. It seems to me probable, that valleys of *the mountains* were all those places called, which were rough, impassable, and intricate. Since then there was much wood, and no easy passage through these countries, the Prophet says that there would be a long valley, which never was before, but which the rending, of which he had spoken, would produce. And for the same purpose he adds, *Reach shall the valley of the mountains to Azal.* This I think is a proper name of a place;[1] yet some render it, next; but I see not for what reason. The meaning then is,—that where there were previously many hills which were not passable, or even mountains through which it was difficult to penetrate, there would be one continuous and even valley to a place very remote.

And he says, that *flight* would be hasty, *as in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah;* for it appears from sacred history that Judea was then shaken with a terrible earthquake. The Jews, as they are bold in their conjectures, suppose that

[1] So thought *Kimchi*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, *Newcome*, and also *Henderson*. *Jerome* renders it "proximum—nearest or next," *i. e.*, the temple. The verb נסתם, with a prefixed ו, rendered, "Ye shall flee," occurs three times in this verse, and *may* be the Niphal of סתם, to stop or close up, as well as the second person plural of נס, to flee. The *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, *Symmachus*, and the *Arabic*, take the first meaning, which *Dathius* and *Blayney* have adopted: then the verse would be as follows,—

5. And closed up shall be the valley of the mountains,
Reach shall the valley of the mountains to Azal;
Yea, closed up shall it be, as it was closed up
At the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.

There are two objections to this version; the one is, that "valley" is feminine, and "closed up" is masculine; and the other is, that מִפְּנֵי, "from the presence," before "earthquake," is not a suitable proposition to come after "closed up:" but to "flee from the presence of," or from, the earthquake, is an appropriate language. Hence the verse itself clearly shows that the right version is that which has been adopted by most of modern critics.—*Ed.*

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this happened when Uzziah approached the altar to burn incense to God; and *Jerome* has followed them. But at what time that earthquake happened is not certain. Amos says that he began to prophecy two years after an earthquake, (Am. i. 1;) but for what cause the earth was then shaken we nowhere read: and yet we learn from this as well as from other passages, that it was an awful sign and presage of God's vengeance. God then intended to announce to the Jews a dreadful calamity, when he thus shook the earth. And for the same purpose also does Zechariah now say, that the flight would be precipitous, as when the Jews betook themselves to flight, as it were in extreme despair, in the time of Uzziah. *As* then *ye fled from the earthquake, so shall ye flee now.* A long time had indeed intervened from the death of Uzziah to the return of the people; hence the Prophet intimates that it would be an unusual calamity, for the like had not happened which had caused so much terror to the Jews for many ages.

But we must remember what I have said—that this coming of God is not described as fearful for the purpose of threatening the Jews; but rather in order to show that the ungodly would not be able to stand in the presence of God, as he would terrify even those for whose aid he would come forth. And we must also observe what has been stated—that God varies his address by his Prophets; for now he speaks to the whole Church, in which hypocrites are mingled with the sincere, and so threatenings must be blended with promises, and then, he directs his words especially to the elect alone, to whom he manifests his favour.

He says at length, *And come shall Jehovah, my God.* The Prophet repeats what he had said shortly before—that God's power would be made evident to the Jews, as though they saw it with their eyes. There is indeed no necessity to suppose that God would actually descend from heaven; but he teaches us, as I have said, that though God's power would be for a time hidden, it would at length appear in the deliverance of his elect, as though God descended for the purpose from heaven. He calls him his God, in order to gain more credit to his prophecy. He no doubt thus courageously

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assailed all the ungodly, to whom promises as well as threatenings were a mockery; and he also intended to support the minds of the godly, that they might not doubt but that this was promised them from above, though they heard but the voice of a mortal man. The Prophet then with great confidence claims God here as his God, as though he had said—that there was no reason for them to judge of what he said by any worldly circumstance or by his person; in short, he declares here that he was sent from above, that he did not rashly intrude himself, so as to promise anything which he himself had invented, but that he was favoured with a divine mission, so that he represented God himself.

And this also is the object of the conclusion, which has been overlooked by some. *All the saints with thee.* There seems to be here a kind of indignation, as though the Prophet turned himself away from his hearers, whom he observed to be in a measure prepared obstinately to reject his heavenly doctrine; for he turns his discourse to God. The sentence seems indeed to lose a portion of its gracefulness, when the Prophet speaks so abruptly, *Come shall Jehovah my God, all the saints with thee.*[1] He might have said "all the saints with him:" but as I have said, he addresses God, as though he could not, on account of disgust, speak to malignant and perverse men, and this serves much to confirm the authority of his prophecy; for he not only declares boldly to men what was to be, but also appeals to God as

[1] The greatest number of MSS. have "and" before "all saints," as well as the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*. The three last have also "his" before "saints." Very many MSS., the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, and the early versions, have "with him," instead of "with thee." Then the best reading would be,—

And come shall Jehovah my God,
And all his saints with him.

Blayney proposes another version,—

And Jehovah shall come,
The God of all holy ones with thee.

He considers that Jerusalem, addressed in the second person in verse first, is addressed here, "with thee," and that what is meant is, that God, the protector of all holy ones, all true believers, would march as it were with Jerusalem as its ally against the nations beforementioned in verse third. Taking the text as it is, the rendering is no doubt literal: but the best authorities are in favour of the text as amended above.—*Ed.*

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his witness; nay, he seems as though he had derived by a secret and familiar colloquy what he certainly knew was committed to him by God. But by *saints*, as I think, he understands the angels; for to include the holy patriarchs and kings, would seem unnatural and far-fetched: and angels, we know, are called saints or holy in other places, as we have seen in the third chapter of Habakkuk; and they are called sometimes elect angels. In short, the Prophet shows, that the coming of God would be magnificent; he would descend, as it were, in a visible manner together with his angels, that men's minds might be roused into admiration and wonder. This is the meaning.

6. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark:

7. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, *that* at evening-time it shall be light.

6. Et erit, die illo non erit lumen pretiosum et coagulatum (*ad verbum est*, non erit lumen pretiositatum et coagulationum.)

7. Et erit, die uno (ille notus est Iehovæ) non dies, neque nox; et erit (*aut*, accidet) ad tempus vespertinum, ut sit lumen.

The Prophet confirms what we have already observed—that the Church would be subject to many troubles and commotions, so that the faithful should not enjoy the common light, but be more miserable than men in general. And he has ever the same object in view, to prepare the faithful to exercise patience, and to remind them that they are not to promise themselves such enjoyments in the holy land, as though they were to be free from the trials of the cross. Lest then they should deceive themselves with vain hopes, he sets before them many evils and many calamities, that they might confidently wait for the aid, of which he had spoken, while immersed in thick darkness, and hardly able to distinguish between day and night. But the rest shall be considered to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast deigned to separate us to be thy peculiar treasure, and leadest us daily under thy banner, and invitest us so kindly and gently by the voice of thy

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gospel,—O grant, that we may not reject so great a kindness, nor render ourselves unworthy of our holy calling; and whatever evils must be borne by us, may we sustain them with resigned minds, until having at length finished the contests by which thou wouldst now exercise and prove our faith, we shall be received into that blessed rest, which is laid up for us in heaven, and has been purchased for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. —Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-sixth.

We explained shortly yesterday why the Prophet says, that there would be for some time no difference between day and night; it was to prepare the faithful for all changes, and to show that they are not to promise themselves anything certain or sure in this world. Days and nights revolve throughout all seasons of the year, but the Prophet shows that there would be an uncertain time, as though it were twilight, or that there would not be constant light, but light mixed with darkness. The two verses ought to be connected together, when he says, *In that day* there *shall not be precious light and mingled light*, or, on the contrary, thick darkness. What he says afterwards, *In that day there shall not be day or night*, is disjoined by some, but not rightly, as we shall presently see.

But with regard to the words, *light of preciousnesses*, it is agreed among all writers that the word יְקָרוֹת *ikarut*, means what is excellent. As to this word then there is no ambiguity; for the Prophet means that it shall not be a light day, such as is wont to be during a clear sky. But as to the second word, interpreters differ. It is written יְקָפָאוֹן, *ikophaun*: קָפָא, *kopha* means to coagulate, to become thick: hence יְקָפָאוֹן, *ikophaun*, signifies density or dense darkness. Some think it to be in construction; and others, that ו, *vau*, is to be put in; and this is probable, as we may see from the context, though yet it may have a twofold meaning. If indeed we join these two words, the Prophet may understand that the light would not be very clear, and that there would not be thick darkness. But we may take the

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light of densities for that which is steady and fixed, which gains such strength, that it cannot be darkened. But I prefer a different view: we know that the copulative in Hebrew is often taken adversatively; and this exposition is the most suitable,—that there would not be clear light, but on the contrary, a density, that is, thick darkness, which would obscure the light of the sun, or hinder the eyes of men from enjoying clear light. This seems to be the meaning of our Prophet, *In that day there shall not be light*, that is, that day shall not be clear, that is, so far that it can be numbered among fair and bright, or clear days; but on the contrary, there will be densities, that is, it will be a cloudy time, for much darkness will fill the sky, and prevent men to see the sun.[1]

As to the subject itself, it is sufficiently apparent what the Prophet meant; for as I said yesterday, and have again reminded you, it was to be a perilous time, so that the miserable Jews would hourly and every moment be filled with fear, as they should see many dangers around them; and there would ever be some appearance of a sudden change. As when we find the south wind blowing, and the heavens covered with clouds, a shower is expected, and every one keeps within doors, and they who travel dare not proceed

[1] In favour of ו instead of י before קִפָּאוֹן, there are *many* MSS., the *Keri* and all the early versions. The word means condensity, that is, of darkness, as it answers to night in the next verse; it may then be rendered "thick darkness." The ו following a negative may often be rendered "nor." The first idea of יקר is bright, splendid, clear; and then, as what commonly belongs to what is bright, &c.,—precious, excellent. It is here in the plural, but has the meaning of an adjective,—a mode of speaking common in Hebrew. It is evident that this verse is more fully explained in the next; there can then be no difficulty about the construction and the meaning,—

6. And it shall be in that day,
   That there will be no clear light nor thick darkness:
7. But one day will that be, known to Jehovah,
   No day, and no night;
   But it shall be, at the time of the evening,
   That there will be light.

By "one day" we are to understand a peculiar day, distinguished from every other. To separate the two verses, as is done by *Henderson*, seems not at all right: and his rendering of the second line, "That there shall not be the light of the precious orbs," bears on it hardly any trace of the Original.—*Ed.*

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lest a storm overtakes them; so also the Prophet says, that this time would be like cloudy and dark days.

The same is the meaning of what he adds, *It shall be one day, when it shall not be day and night;* as though he had said, that there would not be any settled state of weather. Interpreters have given a very different view—that it would be neither day nor night. Some give this reason, because the Lord will rule his Church by faith; and we indeed know that our salvation is hid under the safe keeping of faith. Others give an entirely different meaning,—that the Lord will so fill heaven and earth by his own brightness, that there will be no need for the sun and the moon, according to what is said by Isaiah, "Shine to thee shall not the sun by day nor the moon by night; but to thee shall Jehovah be an eternal light." (Isa. lx. 19.) But these are mere refinements. The real meaning of the Prophet, I doubt not, is,—that men would be in continual trepidation, as when the air is in various ways agitated, when clouds arise, when the thunder is heard, and when the light of the sun disappears. When such is the state of the sky, men we know fear, for there is hardly a distinction between day and night. Thus our Prophet warns the faithful as to future events, and prepares them for patience, lest any storm should overwhelm them, and they should despond when overtaken by it, but that they might look for what had been foretold, even for darkness mixed with light, which would be a continual twilight: and the word, twilight, the ancients have said, is derived from one signifying what is doubtful (*crepusculum à crepero.*)

But we must also notice what he afterwards says, that *this day would towards evening be light.* He here intimates, that there will ever be a joyful end to the troubles of the faithful. Though then they were tossed by many cares, and troubled with various kinds of fear, as though they were in darkness, yet he says, that the *evening* would be clear. And this ought to be carefully observed, for with this solace alone is the Spirit wont to ease the sorrows of the godly, that is, that after God has for a while tried them, there will come shortly an end, and that a joyful one, to all their evils,

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so that God will shine on them like the sun in its meridian splendour. He calls, in short, the attention of the faithful to this end, because God makes thus a distinction between the elect and the reprobate; for though he afflicts both alike, and overwhelms them as with darkness, there is yet light prepared for his elect; and after having suffered them for a time to lie in darkness, he will make them at length to emerge into clear light; but he deprives the reprobate of every hope.

This is the subject which the Prophet now handles; as though he had said,—"There is no reason for the faithful to be disheartened by adversities, when darkness on all sides surrounds them; for the Lord will at length restore light to them, of which it was needful for them to be deprived for a time." But Zechariah speaks not here of one day, but of a period which would be like a dark day, even until Christ by his coming restored the full light, as the Sun of Righteousness, according to what he is called by Malachi.

Then he says, that *this day is known to Jehovah*, in order that the faithful might depend on his good pleasure, and not too anxiously enquire about an event hidden from them and the whole world. *The day* then *is known*, says Zechariah, only to God, though he speaks of things well known, and which the Jews had at length to know by experience. But his object must be regarded, for his purpose was to restrain the godly, that they might not unnecessarily torment themselves, for we are wont to be too curious to know things: when God's design is to calm us, and to make us rely on his providence, then many thoughts come across our minds, and toss us here and there, and thus we torment ourselves with anxiety. As then this disease is innate in human nature, the Prophet supplies a seasonable remedy,—that the faithful are to allow themselves to be ruled by God, and to follow the example of their father Abraham, "The Lord will provide:" when he was in extremity and no escape was open he committed himself to God's providence. So also Zechariah says, that it would be entirely dependent on the will of God alone, now to cover the heavens with darkness, and then to restore the sun, and also to blend darkness with light; and

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nothing is better for men than to check themselves, and not to enquire more than what is right, nor take away anything from God's power, for whenever men murmur against God's judgments, it is the same thing as though they wished to penetrate into heaven, and concede nothing to him except what they themselves think right. Then, in order to check this presumption, the Prophet says, that this day is known to Jehovah, so that the faithful might patiently wait until the ripened end should come, for our curiosity drives us here and there, so that we always wish to be certain about the end, "How long is this to endure?" and thus we complain against God; but when we are not able to subordinate our minds to his will, then we break forth as it were into a furious temper.

We hence see how useful a doctrine this clause contains, where the Prophet sets God as the judge and the arbitrator of all events, so that he afflicts the Church as long as it pleases him, sets bounds to adversities, and regulates all things as it seemeth good to him; and he also covers the heavens with thick clouds, and takes away the sight of the sun. All this then is what the Prophet would have us to know is in God's power, and directed by his counsel. It now follows—

8. And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

8. Et accidet die illo, Exibunt aquæ vivæ è Ierusalem; medium earum ad mare Orientale, et medium earum ad mare novissimum, (*vel*, posterius,) æstate et hyeme erunt.

Here is subjoined a more cheering prophecy,—that the grace of God would yet prevail. Whatever evils, and troubles, and dangers, and fears, and diseases awaited the faithful, he yet says that in such miseries they would still be made happy. And this ought to be carefully observed, for nothing can be more suitably found to alleviate our sorrows than to put in the balance God's benefits on one side, and on the other the punishments and chastisements which he brings on us; for as God's mercy and kindness always greatly preponderate, it cannot be but that we shall be able

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to say with holy Job, "If good things have we received from the Lord's hand, why should we refuse evil things?" (Job ii. 10.) This then is what Zechariah sets before us,—that though the Church may be harassed by many cares, and subject to many fears, and terrified by many dangers, and be as it were in trepidation, yet the grace of God, if rightly viewed, is sufficient to administer invaluable comfort, for *go forth shall living waters from Jerusalem.*[1]

This prophecy no doubt refers to the kingdom of Christ, and this may be sufficiently proved by other passages. The Prophet then has hitherto spoken of the many afflictions, which were nigh at hand, in order that the Jews might not faint or entirely fail; but he now directs their minds to the kingdom of Christ, from whence they were to look for not only a deliverance from all evils, but also the full restitution of the Church, and as it were the renovation of the world.

There is here no doubt an implied contrast between living waters and those which soon dry up: hence he says, that they would flow continually summer and winter.[2] Judea, we know, was subject to want of water, and there were no waters around Jerusalem, except the spring of Siloam, which had waters in abundance, and supplied the wants of the citizens. But the Prophet promises living waters, which would not be like occasional streams, but flow continually. At the same time he seems to regard something higher. As by living waters he understands those which are spiritual, so he compares these waters with all those streams which are earthly; as though he had said, "the fountain from which the two streams arise is inexhaustible, so that its exuberance shall never fail, but shall send forth streams from one sea to the opposite sea, and shall water the farthest regions of the earth."

By the eastern sea many understand the Lake Asphaltes, but it seems to me more probable that the Prophet speaks

[1] "*Living*, that is, running waters. This passage refers to the wide effusion of divine knowledge from Jerusalem when restored."—*Newcome.* The Gospel blessings are often mentioned as waters. See Is. lv. 1; Jer. ii. 13; Ezek. xlvii. 1; John iv. 10. "Perennial waters" is the rendering of *Dathius.*—*Ed.*

[2] "In those countries most springs failed during summer."—*Newcome.*

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of the Persian Sea,[1] for if he had said that the waters would go forth to that lake, the distance would be very short; but he meant on the contrary to show, that the copiousness of the waters would be so large and abundant that though they would pass through the whole earth, yet their flow would never cease. By the hinder sea he no doubt meant the Mediterranean. The import of the whole is,—that though the earth were previously dry, yet such would be the abundance of waters as to be sufficient for all, not only as in former times to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but also to all the Jews in whatever part of the country they might dwell.

Now, since the language is metaphorical, we must bear in mind what I have lately said,—that here is set forth the spiritual grace of God; nor is it a new thing to apply the word waters to the Spirit of God: "I will pour forth waters on the dry land and rivers on the thirsty land" (Is. xliv. 3;) and again, "I will give clean waters." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) There is a twofold reason why Scripture gives the name of waters to the Holy Spirit,—because he performs the two offices of cleansing and of watering: for we are like barren and dry land, except the Lord by his Spirit from heaven gives us new vigour and conveys moisture to us. As then the earth derives moisture from heaven, that it may produce fruit, so also we must have conferred on us by the hidden power of the Spirit whatever vigour we may possess. Since then Zechariah promises a fountain of living waters, he understands that God's grace would be offered to all the Jews, so that they might drink and be satisfied, and no more be exposed as formerly to the want of water.

If any one objects and says, that this interpretation seems forced, the answer is ready at hand, which is this,—that as it is certain that the prophet here speaks of the kingdom of Christ, this rule is to be remembered,—That whatever is

[1] Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* consider it to be the Lake Asphaltes or the Dead Sea. The land of Canaan is here throughout contemplated, and not the whole world, as *Calvin* and many others have thought. The land of Canaan was emblematic of the land of the Church, the whole world; hence what is promised to extend to the extremities of its borders is to be understood, when it appertains to Christ's kingdom, as extending to the utmost limits of the earth.—*Ed.*

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foretold of Christ's kingdom, must correspond with its nature and character. Since then the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, there is no doubt but that when Scripture, as we have seen, promises a large produce of corn and wine, an abundance of all good things, tranquillity and peace, and bright days, it intends by all these things to set forth the character of Christ's kingdom. We hence see what the prophet means by *living waters;* and then, why he says that they would go forth to the east and to the west; and lastly, why he adds, that they would flow in winter as well as in summer. It now follows—

9. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

9. Et erit Iehova in regem super totam terram; die illo erit Iehova unus, et nomen ejus unum.

Here the prophet shows more clearly, and without using a figurative language, what might otherwise be more obscure: he says, that *Jehovah would be king.* Here Zechariah compares the kingdom of Christ with those periods of misery and calamities which had preceded, and which had continued till the coming of Christ. We indeed know that there had been the most dreadful scattering through the whole land, since the time the ten tribes separated from the family of David; for since the body of the people ceased to be one, they wilfully contrived ruin for themselves. When therefore the Israelites fought against Judah, the wrath of God appeared, the fruit of their defection. We indeed know that David was not made king by the suffrages of men, but was chosen by the decree of God. Hence when the kingdom of Israel departed from the son of David, it was the same as though they had refused to bear the authority of God himself, according to what he said to Samuel, "Thee have they not despised, but me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam. viii. 7.) And yet Samuel was only a governor for a time over the people; but when the people through a foolish zeal wished a king to be given them, God complains that he was despised in not being allowed to reign over them alone. This was more fully completed, when the ten tribes separated themselves from the lawful kingdom which God himself had established and had commanded to be inviolable.

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From that time then God was not their king. This is one thing.

Afterwards we know that the kings of Israel joined themselves with the kings of Syria to overthrow the kingdom of Judah, and that the Jews also sent for aid to the Assyrians, and afterwards had recourse to the Egyptians. At length the kingdom of Israel was cut off; then the kingdom of Judah, and the city was destroyed and the temple burnt, so that the worship of God for a time ceased. They afterwards returned; but we know they were ever oppressed by hard and cruel tyranny: then they perceived that they were unprotected, because they had refused to take shelter under the wings of God. Though He had so often told them that they would be safe and secure under his protection, they yet refused that favour. Therefore the Jews then found to their great loss that God was not their king.

Hence when Zechariah now speaks of the restoration of the Church, he rightly says, that *Jehovah would be king*;[1] that is, though the Jews had been torn asunder and pillaged by tyrants, though they had suffered many reproaches and wrongs, yet God would become again their king, that He might defend them against all unjust violence and keep them under His protection. Nothing indeed can be more blessed than to live under the reign of God; and this highest happiness is ever promised to the faithful.

We now understand the Prophet's meaning as to this part; but he shows immediately after that this cannot be hoped for, except the Jews really attended to true religion and worshipped God aright and cast away their superstitions. Hence he joins together these two things,—that the condition of the people would be a happy one, because God would undertake the care of them and perform the office of a king,—and then, that God would be their king, in order that he might be rightly and sincerely worshipped

[1] It is added, "over all the earth," according to our version and *Newcome* and *Henderson*; but it ought to be, "over the whole land," as it appears evident from the verses which follow; and our version and *Newcome* render the same phrase "all the land" in the next verse, while *Henderson*, more consistent with himself, but not with the meaning of the passage, retains the words, "all the earth."—*Ed.*

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by them: *there shall be*, he says, *one Jehovah*. Here the Prophet briefly shows that the legitimate worship of God cannot be set up, unless superstition be abolished. We indeed know that God is jealous, as he calls himself, so that he cannot bear rivals: for when we devise for ourselves any sort of deity, we instantly take from God what is his own. The Prophet then teaches us, that God cannot be truly worshipped, except he shines alone as the supreme, so that our religion may be pure and sound. In short, he indirectly condemns here those superstitions by which the earth had been corrupted and polluted, and also the superstitions by which true religion had been adulterated and the worship under the law had been violated. For this reason he says, that Jehovah would *be one*.[1]

He expresses this still clearer by saying, that *his name would be one*. This second clause may indeed appear useless; for whatever can be said of God is comprehended in his oneness. But as we are wont by various artifices to cover superstitions, and ever devise new excuses and new disguises, by which our impiety may seem specious and plausible, the Prophet expressly adds here, that God's *name is one;* as though he had said, "It is not enough for men to declare that they acknowledge one true God or one supreme deity, except also they agree in some true and simple faith, so that the name of this one true God may be celebrated on the earth." But the idea of the Prophet will become more clear if we notice the difference between the one true God and the name of the only true God, or the one name of God. All

[1] *Henderson* seems to have unnecessarily introduced another version,

In that day Jehovah alone shall be,
And his name alone.

The obvious meaning is, that there would be but "one Jehovah" acknowledged, to the exclusion of all pretended deities, and that his "name" would be one, to the exclusion of every other name. It is an announcement suitable to the previous state of things, when many gods were acknowledged, and many names given to them, under which they were worshipped. Much more emphatical and expressive is the usual rendering,—

In that day there shall be one Jehovah, and his name one.

Εσται κύριος εἷς, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἕν.—*Sept.*

"One name" is mentioned, because the heathens pretended to worship the true God under various names.—*Ed.*

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the pilosophers with one mouth teach, that there are not many gods, but some supreme deity, who is the source of divinity: and this is what has been believed by all heathen nations. But in course of time they began to imagine that from this source many gods have emanated; and hence has come a multitude of false gods, so that some worshipped Jupiter, others Mercury, others Apollo; not because they thought that there are many gods partaking of original divinity; but because they imagined that gods have proceeded from the supreme fountain. As then the Jews might have sought subterfuges, and excused themselves by saying that they did not in heart worship many gods, the Prophet adds the second clause,—that the name of God is one; which means, that there is a certain way in which God is to be worshipped, that there is a certain fixed rule, so that no one is to follow what he himself may imagine to be right, and that the majesty of God ought not to be profaned by various errors, nor should men be lost each in his own notion, but that all ought to attend to the voice of God, and to hear what he testifies of himself.

We now then understand what the Prophet means: he says first, that things would be in a happy state in Judea, when God would be regarded as one, that is, when the whole land had been cleansed from its defilements, and when true religion again prevailed: but as this purity would not easily obtain footing in the world, and as men easily decline from it, he adds, that the name of God would be one, in order that the Jews might understand that God cannot be rightly worshipped except he be alone worshipped; and that it cannot be one, unless there be one faith, prescribed and certain, and not alternating between diverse opinions, like that of the heathens, whose religion is no other than to follow what they themselves imagine or what they have derived from their ancestors.

Now this is a remarkable passage: God distinguishes himself from all idols and his worship from all superstitions; and the more attentively we ought to consider what the Prophet teaches us, because our inclination, as I have said, to vanity, is so great, and this is what experience itself suffi-

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ciently shows, and we also see how easily superstition, like a whirlwind, carries us away, and not only one superstition, but innumerable kinds of superstition. The more then it behoves us to notice this truth, so that the one name of God may prevail among us, and that no one may allow himself the liberty of imagining anything he pleases; but that we may know what God ought to be worshipped by us. And Christ also condemns for this reason all the forms of worship which prevailed in the world, by saying to the woman of Samaria, "Ye know not what ye worship, we Jews alone," he says, "know this." (John iv. 22.) We hence see that this one thing is sufficient to condemn all superstitions, that is, when men follow their own fancies, and observe not a fixed and unchangeable rule, which cannot deceive. It follows—

10. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem; and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner-gate, and *from* the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses.

10. Vertetur tota terra quasi planities à Geba ad Rimmon versus meridiem Ierusalem; et exaltabitur et habitabitur loco suo, (sub se, *ad verbum,*) à porta Ben-jamin ad locum portæ primæ, ad portam angulorum, et ab arce Chananeel ad torcularia Regis.

The Prophet in this verse promises two things,—that the city would be in a very prominent place, so as to be seen at a distance, and also, that it would be a secure and peaceable habitation.

With regard to the former part he says, *Turned shall be the whole land into a plain.*[1] We indeed know that Jerusalem was situated with mountains around it, its foundations, as it is said in Ps. lxxxvii. 1, were on the holy mountains. As then the country was uneven on account of its many hills, the Prophet says, that it would become a wide plain, so that travelling would not be rough and difficult as before; and further, that Jerusalem would not be low in a deep place, but would be on a plain, which would not prevent it from being seen from whatever quarter the visitants might come.

[1] I would render the words,—
All around shall the whole land be like a plain.
The verb סבב means to turn or go round, to be in a circuit.—*Ed.*

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The whole land, he says, shall be a plain *from Geba to Rimmon.* As we do not fully know what sort of country that was, nor where Geba and Rimmon were, I shall not speak here particularly on every word; but it is enough for us to understand the design of what is said, which was to show—that steep places would become level ground, so that Jerusalem might be seen from far, and that the surface being level there would be no mountains to impede a distant view.[1]

Then follows the second clause, *Inhabited shall be Jerusalem in its own place;* that is, though it was formerly pulled down, and now lies as it were dilapidated, and the buildings already begun are very imperfect, yet *it shall on itself be inhabited,* it shall have the same limits, the same boundaries: in short, the Prophet means, that the size of the city would be the same as it was formerly.

Zechariah, we know, performed the office of a teacher, when the Jews began, not without great hindrances, to build the city. They were not able at first to take in the whole compass; indeed they thought this impracticable, until they were encouraged by Ezra and Nehemiah, as we learn from the books of both. Since then the city they began to build was confined in its limits, Zechariah says, that there was no reason to despair, for in a short time it would again attain its ancient splendour, and be extended to all its gates, as it is afterwards stated. And a description of the ancient city, when destroyed, is no doubt given here when he says,

From the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, (he mentions the place of the gate, for there was then no gate, as that part of the city remained as yet desolate,) *to the gate of the corners, from the citadel of Hananeel to the wine-vats of the king.* Though we know not fully now how far the ancient Jerusalem extended, or what was its exact situation, it is yet certain that the Prophet meant that such would be the greatness and magnificence of the city, that its condition would fully equal its ancient splendour which then had disappeared. The city, as it is well known, had been very large; though writers do not agree on the subject, yet

[1] "Geba" was in Benjamin, north of Jerusalem, Josh. xxi. 17; and "Rimmon" was in Judah, south of Jerusalem, Josh. xv. 32.—*Ed.*

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it is commonly admitted, that it included 30 *stadia*. This was certainly no common size; and hence the Prophet states what all thought to be incredible, that though the extent of the city was small, it would yet become a new Jerusalem, not inferior to the former either in largeness or in magnificence, or in any other respect. But we must defer what remains till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou gatherest us for this end, that we may be to thee a peculiar people, and as thou hast separated us from profane men, that thy legitimate worship may prevail among us,—O grant, that we may all attend to thy word, and surrender ourselves wholly to thee, and never turn aside either to the right hand or to the left, but continue to observe the rule which thou hast prescribed, so that we may know by the continual flowing of thy favour that thou rulest in the midst of us; and may we by this enjoyment be stimulated more and more to love, worship, and fear thee, so that consecrating ourselves, body and soul, truly and from the heart, to thee, we may make continual advances in true religion, until having at length put off all the filth of our flesh we shall come to that blessed inheritance, which has been purchased for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-seventh.

11. And *men* shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

11. Et habitabunt in ea, et excidium non erit amplius: et habitabitur Ierusalem confidenter.

ZECHARIAH concludes what he said in the last verse by saying, that Jerusalem when restored by God to its pristine state would be a populous city, for the indefinite verb here used means the same as though he had said, that the number of people would be as great as it had been before, though a small portion only had returned. We indeed know how difficult it is to fill a city with inhabitants when once deserted, especially after a long interval of time. But the

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Prophet here exhorts the Jews to entertain hope, for the Lord would gather again a large number of men, so as to fill the city with inhabitants.

He adds, *there shall be no more utter destruction.*[1] By the word חרם, *cherem*, I have no doubt, the Prophet means an utter ruin, such as had happened when the people were driven into exile. And for this reason and in the same sense, Isaiah says, that God had sworn that the destruction of the city would be like the deluge of Noah, (Is. liv. 9 ;) for he would never again bring such a grievous and dreadful vengeance on his people. But we learn from the whole passage, that this prophecy extends to the kingdom of Christ; for though Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, it is yet true that God had been the perpetual guardian of that city, inasmuch as the fulness of time had come when Christ was revealed. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, that such would be the moderation of God's anger, that the name of the city would not wholly perish, nor the whole people be forced to migrate. This then is what he understands by חרם, *cherem*.

He now adds, that those who returned thither *shall dwell safely in Jerusalem*, for the Lord would protect them, and by an extended hand defend them against all enemies. We have elsewhere reminded you of the Prophet's object; for he wished to goad the tardiness and sloth of those who made so much of their pleasures in Chaldea, that to return to the inheritance promised them from above was unpleasant and grievous to them. Hence he shows of how great a benefit of God they had deprived themselves; for being dispersed among the heathen nations they knew not that God's aid was provided for them. They indeed deprived themselves of that promise which especially belonged to the remnant who dwelt at Jerusalem. The Prophet had also a particular

[1] Rendered "a curse—ἀνάθημα," by the *Septuagint*, by *Marckius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*,—"slaughter—occisio," by the *Targum*. The verb means especially two things—to devote a thing to God—and to devote a thing to death, or to entire ruin. From this latter meaning has come the idea of a curse and destruction, which is evidently what is intended here. The Jews were not to be a curse so as to be utterly destroyed, though they were to be subject to many evils. They are not utterly cut off even now according to the doctrine of St. Paul.—*Ed.*

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regard to those miserable inhabitants of the land, who having been stimulated by God's promises, had despised all dangers and all difficulties, and then had undergone, not grudgingly, vast troubles that they might possess their own country. The Prophet then shows that they had no reason to repent, for the Lord would bless them, and make them to dwell safely in the midst of enemies, by whom we know they are on every side surrounded, and further, that the city would become populous, though they were not then many in number. It follows—

12. And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

12. Et hæc erit plaga qua percutiet (*vel*, plagabit) Iehova omnes populos, qui pugnaverint contra Ierusalem,—liquescet (*alii vertunt*, tabescet) caro ejus, dum ipse stabit super pedes suos; et oculi ejus liquescent in foraminibus suis; et lingua ejus liquescet in ore ipsorum.

The Prophet adds, that though there would not be wanting many ungodly men, who should distress the Church, and attempt many things for its destruction, yet God would be a defender and would inflict punishment, which would exhibit a clear and decided proof of that paternal favour which he manifests towards his Church. But these things do not seem to harmonize—that the people should dwell safely at Jerusalem, and yet that there would be enemies violently disturbing the city: but by saying, that they should dwell safely, he means not that there would be none anxious to do them harm; but that trusting in God's protection they would continue safe in the greatest dangers, as they would feel persuaded that God, who promised to stand on their side, would be stronger than all. The habitation of the godly would then be secure, not because they dreaded no attacks of enemies, but because they firmly believed that they would be preserved by a power from above, though the devil excited many people on all sides against them, and also prepared and suborned many wicked men to contrive their ruin.

And to this power it behoves us to raise up our thoughts

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when various enemies rage against us, so that we may dwell in safety and wait with quiet minds until God shall deliver us; for our safety is concealed under the faithful protection of God, which is only made known to us by the word and promises. Let us, however, bear in mind what the Prophet teaches us here—that when God gives loose reins to enemies, his vengeance is near, so that he will visit with punishment all those wrongs and injuries which we patiently endure.

This, he says, *shall be the plague with which Jehovah shall smite all people.* He mentions *all people* again, lest a multitude of enemies should terrify the faithful, when they found themselves unequal to them, and almost overwhelmed by their vast number; they were not to doubt but that the hand of God would prevail. Then he adds, *His flesh shall consume away*, or melt away: there is a change of number, but the sense is not obscured; for he says, *This shall be the plague with which Jehovah shall smite all people; his flesh shall melt away*, as though he was speaking of one man; and then he immediately adds, *while he shall stand on his feet; and his eyes shall melt away, and his tongue in their mouth.*[1] We see how the Prophet changes the number three times; but there is in the subject itself nothing ambiguous. He means that it would be nothing to God, when resolved to punish the adversaries of his Church, whether they were many or few; for he can easily destroy them all, as though he had to do only with one man. But it seems also that Zechariah had another thing in view—that as God's vengeance would regard each individual, no one of them would be safe, and that thus the vengeance of God would be universal, without any exception, and executed on all armies and on each individual.

We must now notice the kind of punishment which is here described—that God would destroy them all without the hand or the aid of men: *his flesh*, he says, *shall melt away*, or dissolve. In this case divine vengeance is more clearly

[1] The way to account for this is, that the words, את־כל־העמים, at the beginning of the verse, are to be rendered, "every one of the peoples," or, "each of the nations." Then the singular number here refers to "every one," or "each" nation of the nations.—*Ed.*

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seen, that is, when enemies, though no one fights with them, yet of themselves consume away: and then he adds, *when they shall stand on their feet;* and yet their flesh shall melt away. The Prophet no doubt alludes to the curses of the law, among which this is especially to be observed—that God in various ways consumes the wicked, so that they melt away when no cause appears. (Deut. xxviii. 21, 22.)

The meaning then is, that God has various means by which he can reduce to nothing our enemies, though they may seek aid on every side. We are therefore taught by these words to cast all our cares on God; for when our enemies seem to be placed beyond the chance of danger, and confidently boast that nothing adverse can happen to them, yet in God's hand is their death and life, so that they can be consumed by his breath only. There is then no reason for us to depend on earthly means, when we seek to be certain respecting the destruction of our enemies; for God can inwardly consume them; though they may seem to stand whole and sound, yet they will be dissolved, so that even their eyes shall melt away in their cavities, that is, they shall fail without any external force. We indeed know that eyes are well protected; being covered with their defences, they seem to be beyond the reach of harm. But the Prophet intimates that the hidden vengeance of God can penetrate into the bowels and marrow; in short, that there is nothing so safe that it can escape the vengeance of God. *The tongue* also, he says, *shall melt away*, or dissolve (it is the same verb) *in their mouth.* He afterwards adds—

13. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.

13. Et accidet, die illo erit tumultus Iehovæ magnus in illis; et apprehendet quisque manum socii sui; et ascendet manus ejus contra manum proximi sui (*vel*, evanescet; *alii vertunt*, excidetur manus ejus, *quia* עלה *etiam significat excidere.*)

The Prophet seems again to be inconsistent with himself; for after having declared that God would be the defender of his people, so as to destroy and consume all people for their sake, he now adds that there would be intestine discords,

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by which the Jews would wilfully consume one another; while yet there is nothing more improbable than that the people, who live under God's protection, should so divide themselves into factions, as to perish miserably without any outward enemy. But these things do not ill accord, provided we bear in mind what I have already said—that these things are to be taken in a different sense; for the Prophet at one time warns the faithful of the evils which were impending, lest being shaken by their suddenness, they should despond; at another time he promises them a happy condition, for they would ever be the objects of God's care. So then we may explain the matter thus—"Though enemies on every side should unite and conspire against you, though they should hasten with great fury and rage to destroy you, and though a vast number at home, and domestic enemies from the bosom of your city, should rise up against you, yet God will prevail against them, and all your enemies shall at length be for your good and benefit."

This then is the reason why Zechariah blends together what seems to be wholly inconsistent. It was necessary to know both these things—that the faithful might be fully persuaded that God watched over their safety, for it was his purpose to defend the holy city, and to be its perpetual guardian—and then, that they might also be prepared in their minds to bear many trials and troubles, lest they should promise to themselves a joyful state, and thus indulge in carnal security. Having now explained the Prophet's intention, we must briefly notice the words.

He says that there would *be a great tumult from Jehovah among them.* This no doubt refers to the Jews; for the Prophet shows that they would be not only exposed to external injuries, but also to another evil—that they would arm themselves against one another, as though they would tear out their own bowels. *A tumult,* he says, *shall be among them,* which is the extreme of evils that can happen to a city or people; for no danger is nearer than when they who ought as one man to unite strength and courage to repel an enemy, rage internally against themselves.

But this passage deserves special notice, as here is de-

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scribed to us the condition of the Church, such as it is to be until the end of the world; for though the Prophet speaks here of the intermediate time between the return of the people and the coming of Christ, yet he paints for us a living representation, by which we can see that the Church is never to be free or exempt from this evil—that it cannot drive away or put to flight domestic enemies. And we must also observe, that this tumult, as he says, would be from *Jehovah*.[1] He means that whenever the Church is rent, and sects burst forth, and many hypocrites and ungodly men, who for a time pretend to be God's true servants, furiously assail true religion—whenever these things arise, the Prophet means that they do not happen by chance, but that they are God's judgments, in order to prove the faith of his people, and to humble his Church, and also to give to his people a victory and a crown. However this may be, though their own ambition rouses heretics, and all the ungodly, to disturb the Church, and though the devil excites them by his own fans, yet God sits in the chief place, and whatever commotions rage in the Church proceed from him. Hence Paul says that heresies must be, that those who are approved may become manifest. (1 Cor. xi. 19.) Certainly this is not the object of the devil; but Paul shows that it is the high purpose of God, so that he may distinguish by severe trial between his sincere servants and hypocrites; for he not only permits tumults to arise, but even stirs them up. And

[1] Literally it is "the tumult of Jehovah," that is, proceeding from him, occasioned or produced by him. The arrangement of the words would lead us to make such a version as the following—

13. And it shall be in that day,
That there shall be a tumult from Jehovah,
Great shall it be among them;
And they shall strengthen each the hand of his neighbour,
And raised up shall his hand be against his neighbour.

The two last lines describe the tumult and confusion; some would strengthen the hands of their neighbours, others would raise up their hands against them. The verb "strengthen," with no preposition before "hand," cannot mean to seize or lay hold on in an unfriendly manner. See Isa. xxxv. 3; Jer. xxiii. 14; and see also Isa. xli. 13; Ezek. xxx. 25.

The state of things described here corresponds exactly with the account given by Josephus, and in the books of the Maccabees, of the Jewish nation in those days; they were not only assailed by outward enemies, but also by traitors among themselves.—*Ed.*

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hence also we learn, that nothing is better than to flee to him when ungodly men rage and disturb our peace; for he can easily by a nod silence those commotions which he excites.

He adds, *Every one shall lay hold on the hand of his companion, and rise up* (or perish) *shall his hand against the hand of his neighbour.* This passage may admit of a twofold meaning. The first is, that every one for the sake of obtaining help will lay hold on the hand of his neighbour, and yet without any advantage, for his own hand would perish, that is, he who sought aid for his friend could not support himself: and this is the meaning given by many interpreters; as though the Prophet had said, that the state of things would be so desperate, that every one would be constrained to seek help from his friend, and yet could not obtain what he desired, for while attempting to lay hold on the hand of his friend, he would find that he could not grasp it. But a different meaning would better correspond with the next verse,—that *every one would* violently *lay hold on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand would rise up against the hand of his neighbour.* I think then that this part is added as explanatory,—that when God raised tumults among the Jews, every one would start forward to act violently against his neighbour, and raise up his hand to hurt him: for it follows—

14. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem: and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

14. Atque etiam Iehudah pugnabit contra Ierusalem, et congregabitur exercitus (*alii vertunt*, opulentiam, *quod* etiam non male quadraret) omnium gentium in circuitu, aurum et argentum et vestes ad copiam multam (ad multitudinem valde, *ad verbum.*)

Zechariah speaks here no doubt on the same subject; for he adds, that there would be an intestine war between the country and the city, though they were but one body, and since their return they were under the same Divine banner: God had indeed been their leader in their journey, and was in short the only remaining glory of the people. It was then something horribly monstrous, that Judah should join

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himself to enemies in order to destroy the city: yet the Prophet says that this evil, as well as other evils, would soon be witnessed; so that they would have not only to sustain the assaults of enemies, who would come from far, but would also find their brethren hostile and hurtful to them: *Fight* then *shall Judah against Jerusalem.*[1]

At what time this happened, it is well known; for under Antiochus we know that both the city and the whole land were full of traitors; inasmuch as hardly one in a hundred continued to follow true religion. Thus it happened, that almost all were trodden under foot. It was not then without reason foretold by Zechariah, that the Jews would become cruel enemies to their own brethren.

He then adds, *Collected shall be the armies of all nations.* The word חיל, *chil*, means forces, wealth and strength. I am disposed to follow what I have already said,—that the army or strength of all nations around would be collected to overthrow Jerusalem. The Prophet intimates in these words that the Jews would apparently be the most miserable of men, were their condition estimated by their state at that time; for there would be harassing traitors within, so that they had to fear intrigues and hidden dangers, and many people also from every part would unite to destroy them. Nothing can be imagined more miserable than to be assailed from within and from without by almost the whole of mankind. But there will presently follow a consolation; and hence we must bear in mind what I have said, that threatenings are given by way of warning, that the faithful might courageously bear those ruinous attacks, relying on the

[1] Most commentators render this line, "And Judah shall fight *in* Jerusalem," but contrary to Scripture usage. The verb used here for "fight," when followed by ב, almost invariably means to "fight against." The exception which *Henderson* makes as to *place*, is not well founded. The very same form of words occurs in Neh. iii. 8, and the rendering is, "against Jerusalem." See also 1 Sam. xxiii. 1. The history of the Jews, as detailed both by Josephus and the Maccabees, fully bears out what is here said: and this corresponds with what is said of Judah in chapter xii. 2. Whatever view may be taken of this and the preceding chapters, it cannot be denied but that there is a striking coincidence between what they contain, and the events connected with the Jews from the time of Ezra to the coming of Christ.—*Ed.*

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hope of a better state of things, according to what God had promised.

When afterwards he mentions *gold, and silver, and garments*, he intimates that the enemies, whom he speaks of, would not come, as though they were hungry, running to the prey; but that they would be so savage as to seek nothing but blood; for they would be furnished with necessaries, having an abundance of gold and silver. For what purpose then would they come? Not to satiate their avarice, but only to gorge human blood, and thus to extinguish the memory of the chosen people. Even to hear this was terrible; but it was necessary to warn the faithful, lest they should be surprised by any sudden event. He afterwards adds—

15. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

15. Et talis erit plaga equi, muli, cameli, et asini, et cujuslibet jumenti (*vel*, animalis,) quod erit in castris istis, sicuti plaga hæc.

Zechariah in this verse raises up the minds of the godly, so that they might know that their enemies would effect nothing, but that after having tried every thing they would be put to flight by the power of God. And hence appears more evident what has been twice repeated,—that the Prophet does not simply denounce calamities to terrify the Jews, but to animate them to constancy, that they might boldly exult, even when nearly overwhelmed by a vast heap of evils.

The meaning then is,—that after Satan had tried every thing to effect the ruin of the Church, and the ungodly had left nothing undone, there would yet be a successful issue to the faithful; for God would execute his vengeance, not only on men, but also on horses and camels, and on all cattle: and since God's wrath would burn against all animals, which are in themselves innocent, it may with certainty be concluded, that those enemies who had provoked him by their cruelty, could not escape his judgment, and the punishment described here by the Prophet. He then subjoins—

16. And it shall come to pass, *that* every one *that is* left of all

16. Et erit, (*hoc est*, accidet,) ut quisque residuus fuerit ex cunctis gentibus

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the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

quæ venerint contra Ierusalem, ascendat ab anno in annum ad adorandum, (*vel*, ad supplicandum,) Regem Iehovam exercituum, et celebrandum celebritatem tabernaculorum.

Zechariah here advances farther,—that those who shall have escaped the ruin of which he had spoken shall be so humbled that they would of their own accord submit to God. He said before, that God would take vengeance and destroy all the enemies of his Church; but the promise here is still more valuable,—that he would turn the hearts of those who escaped punishment, so that without any constraint they would become obedient; for *come*, he says, *shall they every year to worship God in his temple.* Then the sum of what is said is this, that God would subdue all the enemies of his Church, and in two ways, for some he would destroy, and he would humble others, so as to make them willing servants and ready of themselves to obey his authority. *It shall be* then *that every one who shall remain of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall ascend to supplicate God,* or humbly to worship God.

If the time be enquired, I answer, that whenever the Prophets speak of the conversion of the nations, they are wont to speak always in general terms; but that this is an hyperbolical language, and that still there is nothing unreasonable in this excess, for surely it was a wonderful work of God when a great number from the nations became subject to him. We indeed know, that the name of the people of Israel was universally hated, so that their religion was disliked by almost the whole world. It was then a thing incredible when Zechariah said, that men from all countries would be so changed as to worship the true God of Israel. But many Churches we know were everywhere formed in the world, and men without number professed God's name, and undertook his yoke, and embraced that religion which before had been despised by them, and which indeed they had persecuted with the greatest hatred. It is therefore no wonder that the Prophet should say, that the remnant who escaped the sword of vengeance would at length become the

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willing servants of God. But we ought to notice, as I have said, the mode of speaking commonly adopted by the Prophets, for, in order to amplify the grace of God, they speak in general terms, though what they say ought to be confined to the elect alone.

Ascend, he says, *shall every one from year to year.* Zechariah speaks here also according to the apprehensions of the people. Festivals, we know, were appointed by God; the Israelites ascended at least three times a year unto the temple, but as this was too hard and difficult for the miserable exiles to do, who had been scattered through all countries, those influenced by zeal for religion were wont to ascend unto Jerusalem once a year. To this custom of the law the Prophet now alludes, as though he had said, "God indeed spares some, yet they will at length come to his service without any constraint, and submit to the God of Israel." But he speaks, as I have said, according to the rites of the law; and of this mode of speaking we have often reminded you: I shall therefore pass by the subject, but some additional remarks shall be made at the end of this chapter. *Ascend* then *shall every one to supplicate the king, Jehovah of hosts;* that is, that they might confess the only true God to be king: for he has regard to the prophecy which we considered yesterday, when he said that the only true God would be king. So also in this place, confirming the former truth he says, that they who had before furiously assailed the Church would become the worshippers of God, for they would understand him to be the king of the whole world. But the remainder shall be deferred to another time.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest that thy Church at this day is miserably torn by many discords, and that there are so many traitorous ministers of Satan, who cease not to disturb it, —O grant, that we may find by experience what thou hast promised by thy Prophet, even that thou wilt be the perpetual guardian of those whom thou hast been pleased once to choose as thine own, and whom thou hast received into thine own embrace, so that they may courageously proceed amidst all discords, and come forth at length as conquerors: and may it please

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thee also to put forth thine hand, and to execute that vengeance which thou hast denounced by the same Prophet, so as to destroy and reduce to nothing not only those who openly oppose thee and thy servants and children, but also those serpents, who by intrigues and frauds and by other base means, harass and torment thy Church, until we shall at length attain a full victory and triumph in thy celestial kingdom, together with our head, even Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-eighth.

17. And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

18. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that *have* no *rain*, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

17. Et erit, Qui non ascenderit è familiis terræ in Ierusalem ad supplicandum Regi, Iehovæ exercituum, etiam non erit super eos pluvia.

18. Et si familia Egypti non ascenderit et non venerit, etiam non super eos; erit autem plaga quâ percutiet, (plagabit, *ad verbum*,) Iehova gentes quæ non ascenderint ad celebrandam festivitatem Tabernaculorum.

ZECHARIAH goes on here with the same subject,—that the name of the only true God would be known throughout the whole world, so that all nations would unite in his worship, while the whole earth was before polluted with various superstitions, and every one followed his own god: but he more clearly expresses here than in the last lecture, that vengeance was prepared for all the despisers of the true God. He says then, that the curse of God is laid up for all those who would not come to Jerusalem humbly to worship God there.

We have said that in these words is set forth the legitimate worship of God; for after the coming of Christ it was not necessary to ascend into Jerusalem according to what John says in ch. iv. 21, "The time comes and now is, when the true worshippers of God shall worship God, neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem;" but in every part of the world. But the Prophets speak according to the state of things in their time, and always describe the spiritual wor-

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ship of God according to the types of the law. To ascend then into Jerusalem amounts to the same thing as to embrace true religion and cordially to engage in the worship of the only true God, such as has been prescribed in his word. The meaning then is,—that all who despised the God of Israel would be accursed.

Then what follows is mentioned by the Prophet as a part for the whole; he declares that there would be *no rain* on the despisers of God; as though he had said, that they would perceive God's vengeance, as he would take away from them all the necessaries of life; for by *rain* the Prophet means whatever is needful for the support of life. And we know that as to the blessings of God needful for the present life, the chief thing is, when he renders the heavens and the earth the servants as it were of his bounty to us: for how can we be supplied with food, except the earth by his command open its bowels and the heavens hear the earth, as it is said elsewhere, (Hos. ii. 21;) so that rain may irrigate it, and render it fruitful, which must be otherwise barren?

We now then understand the design of the Prophet,—that in order to invite all nations to the pure worship of God, he declares that all who refused to serve the only true God would be accursed. He further intended by this prophecy to animate the Jews, that they might firmly proceed in the course of true religion until the coming of Christ, and never doubt but that the God whom they worshipped would be the supreme king of the whole world, though before hidden as it were in a corner of the world, while worshipped in Judea alone. The Prophet then intimates that though God had been despised by all nations, his name would yet be sanctified and adored; and also, that if any deprived him of his legitimate worship they would be visited with punishment, because they were destined to perish through famine and want, inasmuch as the heavens would deny rain to them, and the earth would not give them food.

But Zechariah speaks expressly of the Egyptians: and we indeed know that they were most inveterate enemies to true religion; and he might have also mentioned the Assy-

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rians and the Chaldeans; but as the Egyptians were nearer and more contiguous to the holy land, their hatred towards the Jews was more virulent. This is the reason why Zechariah speaks of them particularly. It may at the same time appear strange that he threatens them with want of *rain;* for we know that Egypt expects no rain from above, because of the peculiar condition of the country; for according as the Nile overflows, do the inhabitants look for a fruitful produce of corn and of all other things. The Prophet then ought not to have thus threatened the Egyptians, for they might have justly laughed at him for saying that there would be no rain for them, the want of which is not much felt there. But the Prophet's intention was simply what I have already explained,—that God would be a Father to the Jews, and also to others who joined in his worship according to the law. Though then the Egyptians had no need of rain, yet by this metaphor Zechariah denounced on them sterility as the punishment of impiety.

And we may further observe, that though the overflowing of the Nile irrigated the whole land and made it fruitful, yet rain was by no means useless; and it is said in Ps. cv. 32, "He turned their rain into hail," Egypt being the place spoken of; for the Lord destroyed all its fruit, because the rain was turned into hail. It appears also evident from history, that rain is desirable in Egypt in order to render the produce more abundant. But the Lord has favoured that country with a peculiar benefit by supplying the want of rain by the Nile.

There is then nothing doubtful in the meaning of the Prophet, as his object was to show, that the Lord would constrain all people to become obedient to true religion, not only those Jews who were far removed from Judea, but even the Egyptians themselves, who had been always most alienated from true and pure worship.

He adds, *There shall be upon them the plague.* He now speaks more generally; and what he before specifically mentioned, he now declares in general terms,—that God would execute vengeance and destroy and reduce to nothing all those who took not on them the yoke, so as to worship

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him sincerely, together with the Jews, according to what the law prescribes. He again repeats the words, *who ascended not into Jerusalem;* not that he intended to confine the worship of God to ceremonies or rites under the law; but because it was necessary, until Christ abrogated all the ancient rites, that the worship of God should be thus described; nor could it then be separated from these external exercises.

But here it may be rightly inquired, why the Prophet speaks specifically of the feast of tabernacles, since the passover was deemed first among the festivals. The reason seems to me to have been this,—because it was difficult to believe that the Jews would return to their own country, that God would become again their redeemer. Many interpreters say, that the Prophet speaks of the feast of tabernacles, because it behoved them to be sojourners in the world: but a similar reason might be given for other days. We must then inquire why he mentions the feast of tabernacles and not other feasts. Now we know that when the Prophets speak of the second restoration of the people, they often call attention to that wonderful deliverance from Egypt by which God had proved that he possessed sufficient power to redeem and save his own people. To this instance does Zechariah now allude, as I think, and says, that God would restore his people by his wonderful and inexpressibly great power, so that they might justly celebrate the feast of tabernacles as their fathers formerly did: for we know why God commanded the Jews to dwell every year under the branches of trees; it was, that they might be mindful of that deliverance which had been granted to their fathers; for they had continued forty years in the desert, where they had no buildings, but huts only, made of branches of trees. When therefore they went forth from their houses, and dwelt as it were in the open air in tents, they thus revived the memory of the wonderful manner by which their fathers were delivered. Hence God, in order to show that their return from the Babylonian exile was worthy of being remembered, says here that the *feast of tabernacles would be celebrated.*[1]

In short, the Prophet means that God would be such a

[1] See Neh. viii. 13-18.

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deliverer of his people, that all the nations, even from the remotest parts, would acknowledge it as a remarkable miracle: it is the same then as though he had said, that the deliverance of the people would be an evidence of divine power so manifest and illustrious, that all nations would acknowledge that the God of Israel is the creator of heaven and earth, and is so endued with supreme power, that he governs the whole world; and, in a word, that he is the only true God who ought to be worshipped.[1] It afterwards follows—

19. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.	19. Hæc erit pœna Egypti et pœna omnium gentium, quæ non ascenderint ad celebrandum celebritatem tabernaculorum.

He repeats the same thing, and almost in the same words; but yet it is not done without reason: for we ought to consider how difficult it was to believe what is said, as the Jews who had returned to their country were few in number, and unwarlike, and on every side opposed by their enemies. Since then the Church was almost every moment in danger,

[1] The two verses, 17 and 18, I would render thus,—

17. And it shall be, that whosoever shall not ascend,
Of the families of the land, to Jerusalem,
To worship the King, Jehovah of hosts.
18. Not on them shall be rain;
And if the family of Egypt
Shall not ascend and shall not come,—
On them shall be the plague,
Which Jehovah will bring on all the people
Who will not ascend to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The "land" of Judah, not earth or the world, is what is meant, as it is evident from the contrast in the next verse, "the family of Egypt." The word אֶרֶץ means commonly in the Prophets the land of Canaan. The words ולא before "on them" in verse 18, are left out in four MSS., in the *Septuagint* and the *Syriac;* and they seem to be wholly misplaced here. I render גּוֹיִם "people," and supply כל before it, as in verses 14 and 16, supported by very many MSS., and by the *Septuagint*. The word here and everywhere in this chapter, in verses 2, 3, 14, 16, and 19, is in my view improperly rendered "nations," viewed as heathen nations. It has no doubt this meaning in many places, but it means also people or peoples, *i. e.*, the people of Israel. See Deut. iv. 6; Josh. v. 6. It is a word of general import, signifying the body of a nation; and here and elsewhere in this chapter it means the whole community of the Jews, whether residing in the land of Canaan or in other parts of the world, especially in Egypt. Intestine broils, and not wars with heathens, are referred to in this chapter. Hence we clearly see the reason why "the feast of tabernacles" is mentioned, and why a curse is denounced on those who neglected it.—*Ed.*

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it was no wonder that the faithful had need of being strengthened under their trials, which often disturbed and harassed their minds. This then is the reason why the Prophet repeats often the same thing.

This, he says, *shall be the sin of Egypt and of all nations*, &c. The word חטאת, *chethat*, properly means wickedness, sin; but as *piaculum* in Latin sometimes means sin, and sometimes expiation, so חטאת, *chethat*, in Hebrew: it signifies at one time sin, at another the sacrifice by which sin is atoned: and hence Christ is said to have been made sin; for when he offered himself as an expiation, he sustained the curse which belonged to us all, by having it transferred on himself. (Gal. iii. 13.) As Christ then was an expiation, he was on this account called sin. And the Greek translators did not change the name, because they saw that חטאת, *chethat*, in Hebrew, is taken for a sacrifice or punishment as well as for sin; hence they used the word ἁμαρτία indiscriminately.[1]

So then the Prophet says that this would be the sin or *the punishment of Egypt and of all nations*, as though he had said, "If they despise the God of Israel and contemn his worship, such a contumacy shall not be unpunished; for God will show himself to be the vindicator of his own glory." And hence we conclude, that nothing ought to be more desired by us than that God should reveal himself to us, so that we may not presumptuously wander after superstitions, but purely worship him; for no one rightly worships God, except he who is taught by his word. It is then a singular favour, when the Lord prescribes to us the rule by which we may rightly worship him: but when we assent not to his true and legitimate worship, we here see that our whole life is accursed. It now follows—

20. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses,

20. Die illo erit super frœna (*aut*, phaleras; *alii vertunt*, frontalia; *alii*, collaria; *dicemus postea de hac voce; vel*, stabula, *hoc meum est*,

[1] The *Targum* paraphrases it "the punishment of sin," and so do *Jun.*, and *Trem.*, and *Piscator*. The word "sin" is retained by *Jerome*, *Cyril*, and *Marckius*. But *Newcome* and *Henderson*, in accordance with our version and that of *Calvin*, render it "punishment."—*Ed.*

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HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

et postea dicam rationem; super stabula *igitur*) equi (*hoc est*, equorum, *est mutatio* numeri) sanctitas Iehovæ; et erit (*hoc est*, erunt; *iterum est mutatio numeri*) lebetes in domo Iehovæ sicuti phialæ (*sic vertit Hieronymus, alii vertunt*, pelves) coram altari.

Zechariah teaches us in this verse, that God would become the king of the world, so that all things would be applied to his service, and that nothing would be so profane as not to change its nature, so as to be sanctified for the service of God. This is the import of the whole. There is some obscurity in the words; but interpreters for the most part have been led astray, because they have not sufficiently attended to the design of the Prophet; and thus they have wrested the words to their own views, while they did not understand the subject.

There will be, he says, *an inscription on the shades* or head coverings *of horses, Holiness to Jehovah.* No interpreters have perceived that there is here an implied comparison between the mitre of the high priest and all profane things; for since the high priest was a type of Christ, there was inscribed on his tiara, Holiness to Jehovah, קדש ליהוה, *kodash la-Ieve:* and as the holiness of the temple, and of everything belonging to the service under the law, depended on the priesthood, this inscription must be viewed as extending to everything in the temple, to the altar, to the sanctuary, to the sacrifices, to the offerings, to the candlestick, to the incense, and in short, to all sacred things.

What now does the Prophet mean? There shall be, he says, that inscription which the high priest bears on his head, *Holiness to Jehovah;* there shall be, he says, this inscription *on the stables of the horses.*

As to the word מצלות, *metsalut*, it is only found here. Some derive it from צול, *tsul;* and others from צלה, *tsale;* but the more received opinion is that it comes from צלל, *tsalal*, in which the ל, *lamed*, is doubled. And some render it trappings; others, reins; others, bells; and all only conjecture, for there is no certainty.[1] Some also render it the

[1] It is rendered "bridle—τὸν χαλινὸν," by the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and *Jerome;* "trappings," by the *Targum;* "the deep—βυθὸν," by *Aq.*

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deep; and this sense may be also suitable. But what I have already stated seems to me more probable—that the shades or blinkers of horses are meant, and are here metaphorically called stables. Though then the stable of a horse is a mean and sordid place, and often filthy, yet the Prophet says that it would become holy to the Lord.

The meaning then is, that no place was so profane which would not be made holy when God reigned through the whole world. But if any one prefers trappings, or warlike harness, I do not object; for this view also is not unsuitable. Nothing is less holy than to shed human blood; and hence the Scripture says, that their hands are polluted who justly slay an enemy in war; not because slaughter is of itself sinful, but because the Lord intended to strike men with terror, that they might not rashly commit slaughter. It would not then ill suit this place to say, that the Lord would make holy the trappings of horses, so that nothing disorderly would hereafter be done in war, but that every one putting on arms would acknowledge God to be a judge in heaven, and would not dare, without a just cause, to engage with his enemy.

Ridiculous and puerile is what Theodoret says in the first book of his Ecclesiastical history. He quotes this passage, and says that it was fulfilled when Helena, the mother of Constantine, adorned the trappings of a horse with a nail of the cross; for her purpose was to give this to her son as a sort of charm. One of those nails by which she thought Christ was crucified, she put in the royal diadem; of the other she caused the bit of a bridle to be made, or according to Eusibius, to be partly made; but Theodoret says that the whole was made of it. These are indeed rank trifles; but yet I thought proper to refer to them, that you might know

and *Theod*; "shady procession—περίπατον σκιερὸν," by *Sym*; and "bells," by *Drusius, Grotius, Marckius, Newcome*, and *Henderson*. The last says, that they "were small metallic plates, suspended from the necks or heads of horses and camels for the sake of ornament, and making a tinkling noise by striking against each other like cymbals." The notion of *Blayney*, that the horses and their bells were trophies taken from enemies and dedicated to God, seems not consistent with the tenor of the passage: for the things employed by the Jews are here mentioned, which were to be used in a holy manner, to the glory of God.—*Ed.*

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how foolish that age was. Jerome indeed rejects the fable; but as it was believed by many, we see how shamefully deluded at that time were many of those who were accounted the luminaries of the Church. I now return to the words of the Prophet.

He says, that upon the stables, or upon the trappings of the horses, there would be this inscription—*Holiness to Jehovah*—קדש ליהוה, *kodash la-Ieve:* then he adds, *All the pots in the house of Jehovah shall be as the vessels before the altar;* that is, whatever was before only applied to profane uses, would be invested with holiness. I then give this interpretation—that pots or kettles would be like the vessels of the altar, as the whole apparatus for cooking would be converted to the service of God; as though he had said that there would be no profane luxuries, as before, but that common food would be made holy, inasmuch as men themselves would become holy to the Lord, and would be holy in their whole life and in all their actions.

But most go astray in supposing that the trappings would be made into pots; for the Prophet meant another thing—that holiness would exist among men in peace as well as in war, so that whether they carried on war, or rested at home, whether they ate or drank, they would still offer a pure sacrifice to God, both in eating and drinking, and even in warfare. Such then is the view we ought to take of the Prophet's words—that *all the pots in the house of Jehovah shall be like the vessels before the altar;* that is, "whatever has hitherto been profaned by the intemperance and luxuries of men, shall hereafter become holy, and be like the vessels of the temple itself."

Jerome philosophises here with great acuteness, as the Prophet intimated that the sacrifices offered under the law would be of no account, because God would no longer require the fat of beasts, nor any of the ritual observations, but would desire only prayers, which are the sacrifices approved by him; and hence he renders מזרקים, *mesarekim*, bowls, and not vessels, a word of wider meaning; but it signifies the latter.

We now see that what Zechariah meant was this—that

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God would so claim the whole world as his own, as to consecrate men and all their possessions wholly to his own service, so that there would be no longer any uncleanness, that whether they ate or drank, or engaged in war, or undertook any other work, all things would be pure and holy, for God would always be before their eyes. Let us proceed—

21. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.

21. Et erit omnis lebes in Ierusalem et Iehudah sanctitas Iehovæ exercituum; et venient omnes qui sacrificabunt et accipient ex ipsis et coquent in ipsis; et non erit Chananæus (*alii vertunt*, non erit mercator) amplius in domo Iehovæ exercituum die illo.

The Prophet explains here more clearly what we have already considered—that such would be the reverence for God, and the fear of him through the whole world, that whatever men undertook would be a sacrifice to him: he therefore says, that all the kettles, or pots, or vessels, would be sacred to God. And this is fulfilled when men regard this end—to glorify God through their whole life, as Paul exhorts us to do. (1 Cor. x. 31.) Our provisions and our beds, and all other things, become then holy to God, when we really devote ourselves to him, and regard in all the actions of our life the end which I have mentioned, even to testify in truth that he is our God, and that we are under his guidance. By such comparisons then does Zechariah teach us, that men will be sacred to God; for nothing they touch shall be unclean, but what was before profane shall be sanctified to his glory.[1]

[1] *Drusius*, *Grotius*, and some others, take another view, thinking that the *number* of vessels required for sacrifices would be very great, so that pots would be used, the bowls belonging to the altar being not sufficient. *Grotius* says that Antiochus the Great sent 20 thousand pieces of silver (20 mille nummos argenteos) to be spent in sacrifices in the temple, and that Demetrius sent 150 thousand annually; and he refers to Josephus, xii. 3, and xiii. 5. But *Marckius* justly says, that there is no reference here to number, but to consecration, and agrees in the view given here by *Calvin*. The same is also taken by *Henry*, *Newcome*, *Scott*, and *Henderson*.

The literal accomplishment of what is here said was at the time posterior to Nehemiah, the last reformer recorded in Scripture, who lived many

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Come, he says, *shall they who sacrifice, and shall boil flesh in pots;* as though he had said, That such would be the multitude of men who would ascend to offer sacrifices to God, that the vessels of the temple before in use would not be sufficient. It would hence be necessary to apply for that purpose what was previously profane. The language of Isaiah is similar, for he says that they who were Levites would become priests of the first order, and that those of the common people would become Levites, so that they might all come nigh to God. (Isaiah lxvi. 20, 21.) The meaning then of the Prophet is now clear—that he wished to stir up the Jews to constancy and firmness, who regarded their small number as their reproach, and were almost disheartened: as then they thought that they had in vain returned to their own country, as the Lord did not gather the whole people, he says that God's worship would become more celebrated than at the time when the state of things was most flourishing in Judea; for assemble they would, from the whole world, to offer sacrifices to God at Jerusalem, so that the whole city, with all its utensils, would be sacred to God, for the pots and the sacred vessels of the temple, used before under the law, would not be sufficient.

And he adds, *And there shall be no Canaanite in the land:* the meaning is, that the Church would become pure from all defilements: and this change ought to have given no small comfort to the Jews in their sad and calamitous state; for God had used no small severity, when all were driven into exile; and many tokens of this dreadful rigour still remained, since very few worshipped God, and were despised by all, so that true religion was exposed to the contempt and ridicule of all nations. This compensation then, that the Lord would by this remedy cleanse his Church from its filth, must have greatly allayed their sorrow: on this subject I have already said much.

years—probably from fifty to sixty—after Zechariah, and about ninety years after the first return under Zerubbabel. After Nehemiah, and for nearly *three* centuries, the state of the Jews was very flourishing and prosperous. Their calamities chiefly commenced in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, and continued, with some intermission, until their final overthrow by the Romans.—*Ed.*

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Zechariah now briefly promises that the Church would become pure, so that all would from the heart and sincerely worship God, and that there would be no mixture of hypocrites to pollute the temple and holy things. But this seems strange, since the Church has ever been contaminated by many pollutions: and hence John the Baptist compares it to a floor, where the chaff is mixed with the wheat; and it is also compared to a net, into which are gathered many fishes, some good and some bad; and also at this day, in the kingdom of Christ, the Church is subject to this evil—that it cannot cast out all corruptions: it seems then that the Prophet has spoken hyperbolically. But what we have elsewhere said ought to be borne in mind—that a comparison is made between the ancient state of the people and their second state, when the Church was renewed. As then religion had been in the most disgraceful manner corrupted, and as the Jews had impudently boasted that they were the holy people of God, while they were the most wicked of men, the Prophet justly says, that the Church when renewed would be purer; for the Lord would cleanse it by the cross, as gold and silver are cleansed, which are not only tried by the fire, but become also brighter, because the dross is removed. This is simply what the Prophet means when he says, that *there will be no Canaanite* among the people of God; that is, there will be no foreign or profane men, mingled with the faithful, to pollute the pure worship of God.

Some have wrested the passage and applied it to the last coming of Christ; but this is inconsistent with the subject in hand. At the same time I allow that the kingdom of Christ, according to the prophetic mode of writing, is here described from its commencement to its end. When God therefore purposed to renew his Church, he cleansed it from much filth, and still daily cleanses it, nor will he cease to do so, until, after all the defilements of the world having been removed, we shall be received into the celestial kingdom. Whenever then the Prophets speak of perfection under the reign of Christ, we ought not to confine what they say to one day or to a short time, but we ought to include the

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whole time from the beginning to the end. Hence when Christ appeared in the world, then began to shine the splendour of which Zechariah now speaks: but the Lord will go on until that shall be completed which now makes continual progress.

Some read, *There shall be a merchant no more*, &c.; and they have some reason for what they say, for the word is sometimes rendered merchant: but as in this case, we must have recourse to allegories, and take merchants for impious corrupters who make a merchandize of God's worship, or give this interpretation, that there shall be no merchant any more, because all would freely bring their offerings,—as these explanations are not appropriate, it is better to take the passage simply as it is—that the Lord will gather his elect, so that pure sacrifices will be offered by them all; and that there will be no hypocrites any more to contaminate and corrupt the Church, or to adulterate the worship of God.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast deigned to choose us as thy peculiar treasure, and to consecrate us to thyself in the person of thy only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we may so follow holiness through the whole course of our life, that thy glory may shine forth in all our works: and may we never undertake anything except for this end—that thy name may be more and more glorified; and may we be holy both in body and soul, and free from all the pollutions of the flesh and of the world, that we may be thus confirmed in the hope of our calling, and be encouraged to proceed during the remainder of our course, until we shall at length reach that glory which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

[1] The word is rendered "Canaanite—χαναναιος," by the *Septuagint*,—"merchant" by the *Targum* and *Aquila*, and is taken in this sense by *Jerome*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*: but *Theodoret* and *Cyril* take the first sense, and the latter explains it by "stranger and idolater—αλλογενης και ειδωλολατρης." It is justly observed by *Marckius*, that there is nothing in the passage that can lead us to give the word its secondary meaning of a merchant.—*Ed.*

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THE

COMMENTARIES OF JOHN CALVIN

ON THE

PROPHET MALACHI.

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CALVIN'S PREFACE TO MALACHI.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-ninth.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI follows, whom many have imagined to have been an angel, on account of his name. We indeed know that מַלְאָךְ, *Melac*, in Hebrew is an Angel; but how absurd is such a supposition, it is easy to see; for the Lord at that time did not send angels to reveal his oracles, but adopted the ordinary ministry of men; and as י, *iod*, is added at the end of the word, as it was usual in proper names, we may indeed hence include that it was the name of a man; at the same time I freely allow that it may have been added for some particular reason not known to us now. I am more disposed to grant what some have said, that he was EZRA, and that MALACHI was his surname, for God had called him to do great and remarkable things.

However this may be, he was no doubt one of the Prophets, and, as it appears, the last; for at the end of his Book he exhorts the people to continue in their adherence to the pure doctrine of the Law: and this he did, because God was not afterwards to send Prophets in succession as before; for it was his purpose that the Jews should have a stronger desire for Christ, they having been for a time without any Prophets.[1] It was indeed either a token of God's wrath, or

[1] "It is probable that he was cotemporary with Nehemiah. Compare ch. ii. 11, with Neh. xiii. 23-27; and ch. iii. 8, with Neh. xiii. 10."—*Newcome*. He must then be several years after ZECHARIAH, who began his Prophecy in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, about sixteen years

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a presage of Christ's coming, when they were deprived of that benefit which Moses mentions in Deut. xviii.; for God had then promised to send Prophets, that the Jews might know that he cared for their safety. When therefore God left his people without Prophets, it was either to show his great displeasure, as during the Babylonian exile, or to hold them in suspense, that they might with stronger desire look forward to the coming of Christ.

However we may regard this, I have no doubt but he was the last of the Prophets; for he bids the people to adhere to the doctrine of the Law until Christ should be revealed.

The sum and substance of the Book is,—that though the Jews had but lately returned to their own country, they yet soon returned to their own nature, became unmindful of God's favour, and so gave themselves up to many corruptions; that their state was nothing better than that of their fathers before them, so that God had as it were lost all his labour in chastising them. As then the Jews had again relapsed into many vices, our Prophet severely reproves them, and upbraids them with ingratitude, because they rendered to God their deliverer so shameful a recompense. He also mentions some of their sins, that he might prove the people to be guilty, for he saw that they were full of evasions. And he addresses the priests, who had by bad examples corrupted the morals of the people, when yet their office required a very different course of life; for the Lord had set them over the people to be teachers of religion and of uprightness; but from them did emanate a great portion of the vices of the age; and hence our Prophet the more severely condemns them.

He shows at the same time that God would remember his gratuitous covenant, which he had made with their fathers, so that the Redeemer would at length come.—This is the substance of the whole: I come now to the words.—

after the first return from captivity, and NEHEMIAH returned from Persia in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, about ninety years after the first return, and about seventy-four years after ZECHARIAH began to prophesy.—*Ed.*

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET MALACHI.

CHAPTER I.

1. The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

1. Onus sermonis Iehovæ ad Israel in manu Maleachi.

THEY who explain מַשָּׂא, *mesha*, burden, as signifying prophecy, without exception, are mistaken, as I have elsewhere reminded you; for prophecy is not everywhere called a burden; and whenever this word is expressed, there is ever to be understood some judgment of God; and it appears evident from Jer. xxiii. 38, that this word was regarded as ominous, so that the ungodly, when they wished to brand the Prophets with some mark of reproach, used this as a common proverb, "It is a burden," intimating thereby that nothing else was brought by the Prophets but threatenings and terrors, in order that they might have some excuse for closing their ears, and for evading all prophecies by giving them an unhappy and ominous name.

As we proceed it will become evident that the doctrine of Malachi is not without reason called a *Burden;* for as I have stated in part, and as it will be more fully seen hereafter, it was necessary that the people should be summoned before God's tribunal, inasmuch as many sins had again begun to prevail among them, and such as could not be endured: and for this reason he says that God's judgment was at hand.

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But under the name of *Israel* he refers only to those who had returned to their own country, whether they were of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, or of the tribe of Levi. It is nevertheless probable that there were also some mixed with them from the other tribes: but the Jews and their neighbours, the half tribe of Benjamin, had almost alone returned to their country, with the exception of the Levites, who had been their guides in their journey, and encouraged the rest of the people. They were yet called Israel indiscriminately, since among them only pure religion continued: but they who remained dispersed among foreign and heathen nations, had as it were lost their name, though they had not wholly departed from the pure worship of God and true religion. Hence, by way of excellency, they were called Israel, who had again assembled in the holy land, that they might there enjoy the inheritance promised them from above.

The word *hand*, as we have observed elsewhere, means ministration. The meaning then is, that this doctrine proceeded from God, but that a minister, even Malachi, was employed as an instrument; so that he brought nothing as his own, but only related faithfully what had been committed to him by God from whom it came. It then follows—

2. I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? *Was* not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob,

3. And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

4. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.

5. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.

2. Dilexi vos, dicit Jehovah; et dixistis, In quo dilexisti nos? Annon frater Esau erat ipsi Jacob? dicit Jehova; et dilexi Jacob,

3. Et Esau odio habui; et posui montes ejus solitudinem, et hæreditatem ejus serpentibus desertam (*alii vertunt*, deserti.)

4. Si dixerit Edom, Attenuati sumus, sed revertemur, et ædificabimus deserta: sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Ipsi ædificabunt, et ego diruam; et dicetur illis, Terminus impietatis et populus cui infensus est Iehova in perpetuum.

5. Et oculi vestri videbunt, et vos dicetis, Magnificabitur Iehova super terminum Israel. (*Addendus etiam sextus versus, saltem initium:*)

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6. A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

6. Filius honorat patrem, et servus dominum suum; et si pater ego, ubi honor meus? et si dominus ego, ubi timor mei? dicit Iehova exercituum.

I am constrained by the context to read all these verses; for the sense cannot be otherwise completed. God expostulates here with a perverse and an ungrateful people, because they doubly deprived him of his right; for he was neither loved nor feared, though he had a just claim to the name and honour of a master as well as that of a father. As then the Jews paid him no reverence, he complains that he was defrauded of his right as a father; and as they entertained no fear for him, he condemns them for not acknowledging him as their Lord and Master, by submitting to his authority. But before he comes to this, he shows that he was both their Lord and Father; and he declares that he was especially their Father, because he loved them.

We now then understand the Prophet's intention; for God designed to show here how debased the Jews were, as they acknowledged him neither as their Father nor as their Lord; they neither reverenced him as their Lord, nor regarded him as their Father. But he brings forward, as I have already said, his benefits, by which he proves that he deserved the honour due to a father and to a master.

Hence he says, *I loved you.* God might indeed have made an appeal to the Jews on another ground; for had he not manifested his love to them, they were yet bound to submit to his authority. He does not indeed speak here of God's love generally, such as he shows to the whole human race; but he condemns the Jews, inasmuch as having been freely adopted by God as his holy and peculiar people, they yet forgot this honour, and despised the Giver, and regarded what he taught them as nothing. When therefore God says that he loved the Jews, we see that his object was to convict them of ingratitude for having despised the singular favour bestowed on them alone, rather than to press that authority which he possesses over all mankind in common.

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God then might have thus addressed them, "I have created you, and have been to you a kind Father; by my favour does the sun shine on you daily, and the earth produces its fruit; in a word, I hold you bound to me by innumerable benefits." God might have thus spoken to them; but as I have said, his object was to bring forward the gratuitous adoption with which he had favoured the seed of Abraham; for it was a less endurable impiety, that they had despised so incomparable a favour; inasmuch as God had preferred them to all other nations, not on the ground of merit or of any worthiness, but because it had so pleased him. This then is the reason why the Prophet begins by saying, that the Jews had been *loved* by God: for they had made the worst return for this gratuitous favour, when they despised his doctrine. This is the first thing.

There is further no doubt but that he indirectly condemns their ingratitude when he says, *In what hast thou loved us?* The words indeed may be thus explained—"If ye say, or if ye ask, In what have I loved you? Even in this—I preferred your father Jacob to Esau, when yet they were twin brothers." But we shall see in other places that the Jews by evasions malignantly obscured God's favour, and that this wickedness is in similar words condemned. Hence the Prophet, seeing that he had to do with debased men, who would not easily yield to God nor acknowledge his kindness by a free and ingenuous confession, introduces them here as speaking thus clamorously, "Ho! when hast thou loved us! in what! the tokens of thy love do not appear." He answers in God's name, "*Esau was Jacob's brother; and yet I loved Jacob, and Esau I hated.*"

We now see what I have just referred to,—that the Jews are reminded of God's gratuitous covenant, that they might cease to excuse their wickedness in having misused this singular favour. He does not then upbraid them here, because they had been as other men created by God, because God caused his sun to shine on them, because they were supplied with food from the earth; but he says, that they had been preferred to other people, not on account of their own merit, but because it had pleased God to choose their father Jacob.

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He might have here adduced Abraham as an example; but as Jacob and Esau proceeded from Abraham, with whom God had made the covenant, his favour was the more remarkable, inasmuch as though Abraham had been alone chosen by God, and other nations were passed by, yet from the very family which the Lord had adopted, one had been chosen while the other was rejected. When a comparison is made between Esau and Jacob, we must bear in mind that they were brothers; but there are other circumstances to be noticed, which though not expressed here by the Prophet, are yet well known: for all the Jews knew that Esau was the first-born; and that hence Jacob had obtained the right of primogeniture contrary to the order of nature. As then this was commonly known, the Prophet was content to use only this one sentence, *Esau was Jacob's brother.*

But he says that Jacob was chosen by God, and that his brother, the first-born, was rejected. If the reason be asked, it is not to be found in their descent, for they were twin brothers; and they had not come forth from the womb when the Lord by an oracle testified that Jacob would be the greater. We hence see that the origin of all the excellency which belonged to the posterity of Abraham, is here ascribed to the gratuitous love of God, according to what Moses often said, "Not because ye excelled other nations, or were more in number, has God honoured you with so many benefits; but because he loved your fathers." The Jews then had always been reminded, that they were not to seek for the cause of their adoption but in the gratuitous favour of God; he had been pleased to choose them—this was the source of their salvation. We now understand the Prophet's design when he says, that *Esau was Jacob's brother,*[1] and yet was not loved by God.

[1] The order of the words in the original gives a peculiar emphasis to the sentence—

Was it not a brother that Esau was to Jacob?

The *Welsh* will express it word for word—

Onid brawd *oedd* Esau i Jacob?

The two verses may be thus rendered—

2. "I have loved you," saith Jehovah;
But ye say, "How hast thou loved us?"—
"Was not Esau a brother to Jacob," saith Jehovah?

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We must at the same time bear in mind what I have already said—that this singular favour of God towards the children of Jacob is referred to, in order to make them ashamed of their ingratitude, inasmuch as God had set his love on objects so unworthy. For had they been deserving, they might have boasted that a reward was rendered to them; but as the Lord had gratuitously and of his own good pleasure conferred this benefit on them, their impiety was the less excusable. This baseness then is what our Prophet now reprobates.

Then follows a proof of hatred as to Esau, the Lord *made his mountain a desolation, and his inheritance a desert where serpents dwelt.* Esau, we know, when driven away by his own shame, or by his father's displeasure, came to Mount Seir; and the whole region where his posterity dwelt was rough and enclosed by many mountains. But were any to object and say, that this was no remarkable token of hatred, as it might on the other hand be said, that the love of God towards Jacob was not much shown, because he dwelt in the land of Canaan, since the Chaldeans inhabited a country more pleasant and more fruitful, and the Egyptians also were very wealthy; to this the answer is—that the land of Canaan was a symbol of God's love, not only on account of its fruitfulness, but because the Lord had consecrated it to himself and to his chosen people. So Jerusalem was not superior to other cities of the land, either to Samaria or Bethlehem, or other towns, on account of its situation, for it stood, as it is well known, in a hilly country, and it had only the spring of Siloam, from which flowed a small stream; and the view was not so beautiful, nor its fertility great; at the same time it excelled in other things, for God had chosen it as his sanctuary; and the same must be said of the whole land. As then the land of Canaan was, as it were, a pledge of an eternal inheritance to the children of Abraham, the scripture on this account greatly extols it, and speaks of it in magnificent terms. If Mount Seir was very wealthy and

3. "Yet I loved Jacob, and Esau I hated;
And I have set his mountains a waste,
And his heritage for the serpents of the desert."—*Ed.*

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replenished with everything delightful, it must have been still a sad exile to the Idumeans, because it was a token of their reprobation; for Esau, when he left his father's house, went there; and he became as it were an alien, having deprived himself of the celestial inheritance, as he had sold his birthright to his brother Jacob. This is the reason why God declares here that Esau was dismissed as it were to the mountains, and deprived of the Holy Land which God had destined to his chosen people.

But the Prophet also adds another thing,—that God's hatred was manifested when the posterity of Esau became extinct. For though the Assyrians and Chaldeans had no less cruelly raged against the Jews than against the Edomites, yet the issue was very different; for after seventy years the Jews returned to their own country, as Jeremiah had promised: yet Idumea was not to be restored, but the tokens of God's dreadful wrath had ever appeared there in its sad desolations. Since then there had been no restoration as to Idumea, the Prophet shows that by this fact the love of God towards Jacob and his hatred towards Esau had been proved; for it had not been through the contrivance of men that the Jews had liberty given them, and that they were allowed to build the temple; but because God had chosen them in the person of Jacob, and designed them to be a peculiar and holy people to himself.

But as to the Edomites, it became then only more evident that they had been rejected in the person of Esau, since being once laid waste they saw that they were doomed to perpetual destruction. This is then the import of the Prophet's words when he says, that the possession of Esau had been given *to serpents*. For, as I have already said, though for a time the condition of Judea and of Idumea had not been unlike, yet when Jerusalem began to rise and to be repaired, then God clearly showed that that land had not been in vain given to his chosen people. But when the neighbouring country was not restored, while yet the posterity of Esau might with less suspicion have repaired their houses, it became hence sufficiently evident that the curse of God was upon them.

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And to the same purpose he adds, *If Edom shall say, We have been diminished, but we shall return and build houses; but if they build, I will pull down, saith God.* He confirms what I have stated, that the posterity of Edom had no hope of restoration, for however they might gather courage and diligently labour in rebuilding their cities, they were not yet to succeed, for God would pull down all their buildings. This difference then was like a living representation, by which the Jews might see the love of God towards Jacob, and his hatred towards Esau. For since both people were overthrown by the same enemy, how was it that liberty was given to the Jews and no permission was given to the Idumeans to return to their own country? There was, as it has been said, a greater ill-will to the Jews, and yet the Chaldeans dealt with them more kindly. It then follows, that all this was owing to the wonderful purpose of God, and that hence it also appeared, that the adoption, which seemed to have been abolished when the Jews were driven into exile, was not in vain.

Thus then *saith Jehovah of hosts, They shall build,* that is, though they may build, *I will overthrow; and it shall be said to them, Border of ungodliness, and a people with whom Jehovah is angry for ever.* By the border of ungodliness he means an accursed border; as though he had said, "It will openly appear that you are reprobate, so that the whole world can form a judgment by the event itself." By adding, *A people with whom Jehovah is angry* or displeased, he again confirms what I have said of love and hatred. God might indeed have been equally angry with the Jews as with the Edomites, but when God became pacified towards the Jews, while he continued inexorable to the posterity of Esau, the difference between the two people was hence quite manifest.

Noticed also must be the words, עד־עולם, *od-oulam*, for ever: for God seemed for a time to have rejected the Jews, and the Prophets adopt the same word זעם, *som*, angry, when they deplore the condition of the people, who found in various ways that God was angry with them. But the wrath of God towards the Jews was only for a time, for he did not wholly forget his covenant; but he became angry

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with the Edomites for ever, because their father had been rejected: and we know that this difference between the elect and the reprobate is ever pointed out, that when God visits sins in common, he ever moderates his wrath towards his elect, and sets limits to his severity, according to what he says, "If his posterity keep not my covenant, but profane my law, I will chastise them with the rod of man; but my mercy will I not take away from him." (Ps. lxxxix. 31-33; 2 Sam. vii. 14.) But with regard to the reprobate, God's vengeance ever pursues them, is ever suspended over their heads, and ever fixed as it were in their bones and marrow. For this reason it is that our Prophet says, that God would be angry with the posterity of Esau.

He adds, *Your eyes shall see.* The Jews had already begun in part to witness this spectacle, but the Prophet speaks here of what was to continue. *See* then *shall your eyes;* that is, "As it has already appeared of what avail gratuitous election has been to you, by which I have chosen you as my people, and as ye have also seen on the other hand how it has been with your relations the Edomites, because they had been rejected in the person of their father Esau; so also this same difference shall ever be evident to you in their posterity: *see* then *shall your eyes.*

And ye shall say, Magnified let Jehovah be over the border of Israel; that is, "The event itself will extort this confession,—that I greatly enhance my goodness towards you." For though tokens of God's grace shone forth everywhere, and the earth, as the Psalmist says, is full of his goodness, (Ps. civ. 24;) yet there was in Judea something special, so that our Prophet does not in vain say, that there would be always reasons for the Jews to celebrate God's praises on account of his bounty to them more than to the rest of the world. And the Prophet no doubt reproves here indirectly the wickedness of the people, as though he had said,—"Ye indeed, as far as you can, bury God's benefits, or at least extenuate them; but facts themselves must draw from you this confession—that God deals bountifully with the border of Israel, that he exercises there his favour more remarkably than among any of the nations."

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After having briefly referred to those benefits which ought to have filled the Jews with shame, he comes at length to the subject he had in view; for his main object, as I have already stated, was to show, that it was God's complaint that he was deprived of his own right and in a double sense, for the Jews did not reverence him as their Father, nor fear him as their Lord. He might indeed have called himself Lord and Father by the right of creation; but he preferred, as I have already explained, to appeal to their adoption; for it was a remarkable favour, when the Lord chose some out of all the human race; and we cannot say that the cause of this was to be found in men. Whom then he designs to choose, he binds to himself by a holier bond. But if they disappoint him, wholly inexcusable is their perfidy.

As we now understand the Prophet's meaning, and the object of this expostulation, it remains for us to learn how to accommodate what is taught to ourselves. We are not indeed descended from Abraham or from Jacob according to the flesh; but as God has engraved on us certain marks of his adoption, by which he has distinguished us from other nations, while we were yet nothing better, we hence see that we are justly exposed to the same reproof with the Jews, if we do not respond to the calling of God. I wished thus briefly to touch on this point, in order that we may know that this doctrine is no less useful to us at this day than it was to the Jews; for though the adoption is not exactly the same, as it then belonged to one seed and to one family, yet we are not superior to others through our own worthiness, but because God has gratuitously chosen us as a people to himself. Since this has been the case, we are his; for he has redeemed us by the blood of his own Son, and by rendering us partakers, by the gospel, of a favour so ineffably great, he has made us his sons and his servants. Except then we love and reverence him as our Father, and except we fear him as our Lord, there is found in us at this day an ingratitude no less base than in that ancient people. But as I wished now only to refer to the chief point, I shall speak to-morrow, as the passage requires, on the subject of election: but it was necessary first briefly to show the Prophet's

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design, as I have done; and then to treat particular points more at large, as the case may require.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only designed to give us a life in common in this world, but hast also separated us from other heathen nations, and illuminated us by the Sun of Righteousness, thine only-begotten Son, in order to lead us into the inheritance of eternal salvation,—O grant, that having been rescued from the darkness of death, we may ever attend to that celestial light, by which thou guidest and invitest us to thyself; and may we so walk as the children of light, as never to wander from the course of our holy calling, but to advance in it continually, until we shall at length reach the goal which thou hast set before us, so that having put off all the filth of the flesh, we may be transformed into that ineffable glory, of which we have now the image in thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventieth.

We saw yesterday what the object of Malachi was in reminding the Jews that they were loved and chosen by God; it was, that he might the more amplify their ingratitude for having rendered such an unworthy reward for so great a favour of God: as he had preferred them to all other nations, he had justly bound them to perpetual obedience; but they had shaken off the yoke, and having despised God had given themselves up again to many corruptions, as we have yesterday stated. But I reminded you at the same time, that the Prophet refers not here to those benefits with which God favours indiscriminately all mankind, but brings forward the adoption by which he had set apart the seed of Abraham as his peculiar people.

But that it may appear more fully how just this expostulation was, let us first observe, that it is one kind of obligation that God has created us men in his image and after his likeness; for he might have created us dogs and asses, and not men. Adam, we know, was taken from the earth, as other animals were: then as to the body there is no difference

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between men and other creatures. When it is said that God breathed into man the breath of life, we ought not to dream as the Manicheans do, that man's soul is by traduction; for so they say, affirming that man's soul is from the substance of the Deity; but Moses on the contrary understands that man's soul was created from nothing. We are born by generation, and yet our origin is clay; and the chief thing in us, the soul, is created from nothing. We hence see that we differ from animals because God was pleased to create us men. He therefore will justly charge us with ingratitude, if we do not serve him; for it was for this end he created us in his own image.

But there is here mentioned a special favour—that the Lord took to himself the seed of Abraham, as it is said in the song of Moses, that all nations are God's, but that he had cast his line to set apart Israel for himself. (Deut. xxxii. 9.) Though then the whole world was under God's government, it was yet his will to choose one family. If the cause be enquired, it is not to be found in men; for all were created from the earth, and souls were implanted in their bodies created from nothing. Since it was so, we see that the difference arose from the fountain of gratuitous favour—that God preferred one race to the rest; and as we stated yesterday, Moses often repeats this—that the Jews were not chosen because they were more excellent than other nations, but because God gratuitously loved their fathers. (Deut. vii. 7.) By love he means gratuitous favour.

Malachi then does not consider here that the Jews had been chosen before other nations on the ground of their own merit; for if he granted this, they might have objected and said—"Why dost thou remind us that God has favoured us more than other nations, since he deemed us worthy, and rewarded our merit?" But the Prophet takes it as admitted, according to what I have already said, that the Jews were by nature like other nations, so that their different condition did not proceed from themselves, or from their own worthiness, but from the gratuitous love of God.

A third step is also to be noticed here; for God selected a part only from the very race of Abraham, as Esau and

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Jacob were brothers, and Esau was first according to the order of nature, for he was the first-born; and yet God rejected him, and appointed the favour of election to be in the posterity of Jacob. This third step then was election.

These things ought to be carefully considered. Men are peculiarly bound to God, because he might have created them asses and dogs, and not men; but it has pleased him to form them in his own image. The second step is, that he chose the race of Abraham, when his empire extended over all nations without exception: for how was it that God chose to be the father and saviour of one people only, when the whole world was under his authority? Here shines forth, as I have already said, his gratuitous favour; and in addition to the testimonies of Moses, it is often said in the Psalms that God loved the fathers, that he did to them what he had not done to other nations, that he made known his judgments to them. (Psalm clxviii. 1.) There are many passages in which God commemorates his favour to the Jews, because it pleased him to distinguish them from other nations, while yet the condition of all by nature was wholly the same. Now the third step which Malachi mentions ought to be carefully noticed—that God not only promised to be a God to Abraham and to his seed, but also made a difference between the very sons of Abraham, so as to reject some and to choose others; and it is on this point that Paul dwells in the ninth chapter to the Romans; for he says, that not all who are of Israel—that is, who derive their origin from him—are true and legitimate Israelites, but those who are called. For it was Paul's object to refute the Jews, for they boasted that they were a holy people, though they wilfully rejected Christ and his gospel. For when the apostles proved that the Redeemer promised had been sent, the proud answer in the mouth of the Jews was this—"Are not we the Church of God? but we do not acknowledge this Christ whom ye would thrust upon us." As then the Jews, through this false pretence, despised the favour of God, and sought to trample Christ as it were under foot, Paul repels this arrogance, and shows that they excelled not the nations, except by virtue of a gratuitous adoption,

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and that this adoption was to be so extended to the whole race of Abraham as yet to be confined to a certain number.

In the same manner do the Papists act in the present day. As they estimate faith by external tokens, they haughtily object to us, and say that they are the Church; as though a general promise were sufficient without the Spirit, who is justly called the Spirit of adoption, by whom God seals it within, even in our hearts.

Now Paul adds evidences of the fact, and brings forward the instance of Jacob and Esau. Of the twin brothers, one, he says, was chosen, and the other passed by; and yet both were the sons of Abraham. It then follows that there is a third step in election, as I have already stated. Now from this third proceeds a fourth—that God takes some of the sons of Jacob, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world, and others he rejects; and of this fact Paul adduces a sure proof, or assigns an evident reason: God preferred Jacob to his brother, the first-born, but not on account of any merit: if then the free mercy of God availed so much in the election of Jacob, it follows that the same still prevails with regard to his posterity. If it be again asked, whence comes it that some are faithful and others are reprobate, the answer is, because it so pleases God. Hence Paul ascends higher and says, that before they were born, and had done neither good nor evil, it was said, the elder shall serve the younger; and then he brings forward this prophecy—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

If then we wisely consider the whole passage, we shall find what I have stated—that from the third step we may proceed to a fourth, and that is, that from the sons of Jacob God chose whom he pleased and rejected others; for when he chose Jacob, God was not bound to him any more than he was before. The same promise was indeed repeated to Jacob, which had been given to Abraham; but from Abraham proceeded Ishmael, who was rejected, we know, from God's Church; and the same was the case with the other sons of Abraham. Isaac was alone chosen. But Isaac, the father of Esau and Jacob, was not able at his own pleasure to retain them both; but here the free and hidden election

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of God appeared, so that Esau was rejected, and Jacob remained as the legitimate heir to the divine favour.

We now then more fully understand what the Prophet means: he does not charge the Jews with having shaken off every fear of that God, in whose image they had been created; but he enhances their ingratitude, because they gave no response to the free adoption of God, for they had been chosen from all other nations, and not only this, but they had been separated again from the very race of Abraham, and this was their second election. Another thing must also be added respecting their gratuitous election; for the reproof of the Prophet would not have been received, except God in his adoption had regard only to his own favour; for if we grant that either Jacob or Abraham had merited anything, what the Prophet says, *Was not Esau Jacob's brother?* would not have availed. An answer might have been readily given, "He was indeed his brother, but his virtue being meritorious set him before his brother." But the Prophet here presses this point on the Jews—that having been bound by so many benefits, they yet were become as it were spurious; for they had degenerated from the favour which God had conferred on them. We hence see that by these words of the Prophet it is sufficiently proved—that Abraham had been chosen by God in preference to all other nations, Isaac in preference to his brother Ishmael, and Jacob in preference to Esau.

And Scripture is full of proofs on the subject, and experience also sufficiently demonstrates the truth. Moses says, that it was not by their own virtue that they excelled other nations, for they were a rebellious and a stiff-necked people. Though God then knew the perverse character of that nation, it yet pleased him to make them an example of his wonderful goodness. There is therefore no reason for us to seek any other cause for adoption except the will of God. And since the election of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was gratuitous, it follows that each one is freely chosen whom God separates from the whole body; and thus we come to the fourth step; for what is said here, that Jacob was chosen, ought not to be confined to his person, but what he

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had in common with his posterity. Jacob then was chosen —for what purpose? that his children might be God's holy and peculiar people. Now if we consider his whole offspring, we shall find that all who descended from Jacob were not legitimate Israelites, for the greatest part of them were rejected. As then many who derived their origin from Jacob, were not less reprobate than Esau, it follows that God's free favour and gratuitous mercy prevails as to individuals: and this is the subject which Paul discusses in the ninth chapter to the Romans.

It seems hard to many, that God should choose some and not all, and that he should regard no worthiness, but of his own free will choose whom he pleases, and reject others. But whence comes this objection, except that they wish to restrain God and subject him to their own judgment? But we must come to the principle to which I have referred. If it seems unreasonable to them that one of two should be chosen and the other rejected, how can they defend the justice of God (if need there be of their apology) with regard to an ass and man? for as I have said, they both proceeded, both asses and men, from the same lump as to their bodies. Every vigour and strength in the ass has been created by the hidden power of God: and as to the soul of man, though its essence is immortal, it has yet been created from nothing. Now, then, let these wise censors answer for God in this case, whom they think to be exposed to many calumnies, when we say that men's salvation depends on his will, so that he rejects some and chooses others.

But as to general election, there is the same difficulty to satisfy the judgment of men: for as we have already said, there is no difference between men but what arises from hidden election. They indeed imagine in this case a foreknowledge as the mother of election: but the notion is extremely foolish and puerile. They then say, that some are elected by God and some are rejected, because God, to whom nothing is hid, foresees what every one will be. But I now ask, Whence is it that one is virtuous, while another is vicious? If they say, from free-will, doubtless creation is anterior to free-will: this is one thing. Then we know that

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in Adam all men were created alike; for how is it that we are all exposed to eternal death, and that the vengeance of God extends over us all, and at this day prevails through the whole world? How is this, except that the condition of us all originally is one and the same? It follows then, that if Adam stood upright, all men would be alike in their integrity. I do not now speak of special gifts; for there would have been, I allow, a difference of endowments had nature remained perfect; but as to eternal life the condition of all would have been the same. Now after the fall of Adam we are all lost. What can then be more foolish and absurd than to imagine that there is some virtue in man by which he excels others, since we are all equally accursed in the person of Adam? For who hath made thee to excel, saith Paul? He proves that there is no excellency in man, except what proceeds from the bounty of God only, and as I have stated, the reason is quite manifest.

For either original sin does not belong to all men, or God cannot foresee that this man will be just and that man unjust. Why? All are naturally reprobate in Adam and liable to eternal death, and the reason is evident, for nothing is found in men but sin. The foreknowledge of God then cannot be the cause of our election, for by looking on the whole race of man, he finds them all under a curse from the least to the greatest.

We see then how foolishly do they talk and prattle who ascribe to mere and naked prescience what ought to be ascribed to the good pleasure of God. That God made himself known to the race of Abraham, that he designed to deposit his law with the Israelites—all this was his peculiar favour, and no other reason can be assigned for it except gratuitous adoption. God then favoured the children of Abraham with this privilege, because it so pleased him: for if we say that they were worthy, and by their virtue rendered themselves deserving, the Holy Spirit does in the first place everywhere speak against us, and in the second place experience and facts, for the obstinacy of that people was extraordinary. But we ought to be satisfied with the authority of Scripture, since God makes known and illustrates his

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favour by this instance—that he loved Abraham and his children, that is, that he was favourable to the Jews through his own goodness only, and this is what we shall hereafter see still more clearly. Let this then remain as a fixed principle—that the cause of our election is nothing else but the mere favour of God. If we seek a cause apart from God, when we enquire about our election, we shall wander in a labyrinth.

That the same principle holds as to individuals, I have already proved. It ought indeed to be sufficient for us, that Paul passes from the person of Jacob to individuals among his posterity. For he adduces as it were an instance in the two brothers, in order to convince us that no one is chosen on account of his own virtue, but according to the good pleasure of God: nor was it necessary to state these circumstances—that one was chosen when the brothers were not yet born, and when they had not done either good or evil—that it was not through works but through him who called, except he meant to prove this, that it is in God's power to choose whom he wills and to reject whom he wills. But as Augustine reminds us, nothing can be imagined more absurd than that notion, with which many are pleased, that God has foreknown what men will be, for Paul excludes such foreknowledge as the cause when he infers, that it was not owing to works but to him who called, that God preferred the one to the other, for neither of them, while in their mother's womb, had done either good or evil.

Paul brings also a confirmation from another declaration of Moses, "I will pity whom I will pity, and mercy will I show to whom I will be merciful." By these words God clearly declares that it was in his power to reject whom he pleased of the seed of Jacob, and to choose whom he pleased. What then he had before said respecting one man, God now applies to the whole seed, for he speaks not there of foreign nations, but of that holy and chosen people. When God threatened with ruin all the children of Abraham, Moses humbly deprecated this, lest he should annul his own covenant: God answered him, "I will pity whom I will pity,"—what does this mean? that there is no other cause why God

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retains some for himself and rejects others, than his own will. The repetition may seem superfluous and frigid, "I will pity whom I will pity," but it is very emphatical; as though he had said, "I might have chosen for myself another from the world and not Abraham, but I have according to my own good pleasure adopted him; and Ishmael might have been as dear to me as Isaac, but it has been my will that the blessing should rest on Isaac; when he also had begotten two children, I repudiated the first-born and choose Jacob, and now from the posterity of Jacob I will choose for myself whom I please, for there is to be found no other cause but my will, 'I will then pity whom I will pity, and mercy will I show to whom I will be merciful.'" If then in this case men will contend with God, and would know why he chooses this rather than that man, the answer he gives is, that the cause is to be found in his mercy alone, for he is bound to no one.

We now see how the folly of those vanishes away who would have foreknowledge to be the cause of election; and also that they who murmur against God, are sufficiently refuted by this reason, that it is in his power either to choose or to reject, inasmuch as he is under obligations to none.

As to reprobation, the cause of it is sufficiently manifest in the fall of Adam, for, as we have said, we all fell with him. It must still be observed, that the election of God is anterior to Adam's fall; and that hence all we who are rescued from the common ruin have been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world, but that others justly perish though they had not been lost in Adam; because God appointed Christ the head of his Church, in order that we might be saved in him, not all, but those who have been chosen.

And with regard to the proof, it is not necessary here to bring together the mass of passages found in scripture, for this would be endless. But there are, however, some remarkable passages, by which it is sufficiently evident that some are chosen from the whole world as well as from the race of Abraham, according to God's good pleasure only, and that others are rejected, and that there is no other cause to be found but his will; for our election is hid in the

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eternal and secret counsel of God, and founded on Christ, and reprobation is also hid in the judgment of God. Now if we wish to penetrate into this mystery, we must know that it is a great and unfathomable abyss: here all our ideas vanish away. In the meantime, however, God does not lose his liberty to choose and reject whom he pleases.

With regard to election, the ninth chapter to the Romans ought to be sufficient, or rather the three chapters, for Paul pursues the same argument to the end of the eleventh chapter, and then exclaims that the riches of God's wisdom and goodness are incomprehensible, and that his judgments are untraceable. He speaks also of the elect in the first chapter to the Ephesians; and the sum of what he says is, that all the faithful had been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world, and through the good pleasure of God only, in order that he might show in them the glory of his goodness.

By no refinements can they escape who attempt to darken this truth; for Paul very clearly and briefly declares that the whole world has not been chosen, but the faithful, who are afterwards favoured with the Spirit of adoption: and thus sufficiently is that fancy refuted, that the election of God ought to be connected with his promises. I wonder that men of learning, endued with judgment and versed in scripture, so frigidly pass over the subject, and that they are not at least moved when they see that they give to many the occasion of foolishly going astray, and that some take hence the opportunity to calumniate. We must, however, declare what this passage requires—that those are very unwise who seek to subvert or overthrow the eternal election of God by this contrivance—that God addresses all men generally, "Come unto me"—"I am your Father." Since God then offers his grace to all by the external preaching of his word, they will have it that all are elected: but Paul says, that we are believers, because we have been elected. If then it be asked, why some obstinately reject the grace of God, and others embrace it in the spirit of meekness, Paul assigns the reason, and it is this—because God illuminates those who believe, inasmuch as he has chosen them before the creation of the world. It then follows that God

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so speaks generally, as that the efficacy of the doctrine still depends on his secret good pleasure; for whence is faith, but from his peculiar favour? and why does he not communicate his grace to all? even because he has not chosen all. We see that Paul thus proceeds step by step, that he might teach us that faith emanates from the fountain of free election; and he raises up election into the highest eminence to show that it is not right to enquire into its cause. Thus much about election.

As to reprobation, I know that many greatly dislike this doctrine—that some are rejected, and that yet no cause can be found in themselves why they thus remain disapproved by God. But there is here need of docility and of a meek spirit, to which Paul also exhorts us, when he says, "O man, who art thou who answerest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20.) For were it lawful to investigate the cause, surely Paul, who had been taken up to the third heaven, might have showed us the way; but he is here silent and drives us away from the indulgence of a bold and an over curious spirit. Since the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Paul restrains the presumption of men, that they may not dare to go beyond this step—that God hardens whom he wills and rejects whom he wills, why do men leap beyond this, except they wilfully seek to carry on war with God? and yet they pretend modesty, and under this pretext they seek to bury the doctrine of election; we ought, they say, to speak soberly of mysteries. This last sentence I allow fully; but what is our sobriety but our docility? that is, when we embrace what God declares in his word, and never allow ourselves to investigate more than what he teaches us. But they would extinguish God's word; nay, they dare openly to pronounce blasphemies against God, and to find fault with the Spirit, who has spoken by the prophets and the apostles.

We indeed see that there are many devils who preach modesty, when their object is to suppress the light and this chief doctrine, the main basis of our salvation; and they extort wicked edicts from the ignorant and the slumbering, as though it were in the power of men, by babbling about things unknown, and by barbarously mixing all things to-

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gether, to thrust God as it were from his celestial throne. This is horribly monstrous, and ought to be detested by all; for it would be better that all the empires of the world should be swallowed up in the lowest depths, than that mortal creatures should raise themselves up as it were into heaven, and attempt to penetrate into the secret things of God. But, however, when the whole world either assail this doctrine by barking, or seek to subvert it by threats and terrors, or when all in various ways manifest their rage, and when they roll thunders who seem to themselves to be very powerful, it behoves us to hold fast this doctrine, that God alone is the author of our salvation, because he has been pleased freely to elect us, and also that he possesses power over all the human race, so that some, according to his will, are elected and some are rejected, and that he ever acts justly, and holds secret the cause both of election and of reprobation. But it is no wonder that we are so blind, for we are stupid by nature, nay, blind altogether; and were we angels, it would be still our duty reverently to regard the manifold wisdom of God, which no human minds, no, not even angelic minds, can fully comprehend. Other things we must defer.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased to adopt us as thy people for this end, that we may be ingrafted as it were into the body of thy Son, and be made conformable to our head,—O grant, that through our whole life we may strive to seal in our hearts the faith of our election, that we may be the more stimulated to render thee true obedience, and that thy glory may also be made known through us; and those whom thou hast chosen together with us may we labour to bring together, that we may unanimously celebrate thee as the Author of our salvation, and so ascribe to thee the glory of thy goodness, that having cast away and renounced all confidence in our own virtue, we may be led to Christ only as the fountain of thy election, in whom also is set before us the certainty of our salvation through thy gospel, until we shall at length be gathered into that eternal glory which He has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-first.

6. A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord *is* contemptible.

8. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.

6. Filius honorat patrem, et servus dominum suum: si pater ego, ubi honor meus? et si dominus ego, ubi timor mei? dicit Iehova exercituum ad vos, O sacerdotes, qui contemnitis nomen meum: et dixistis, In quo contempsimus nomen tuum?

7. Qui offertis super altare meum panem pollutum; et dixistis, In quo polluimus te? Quum dicitis, Mensa Iehovæ ipsa est contemptibilis (*vel*, despecta.)

8. Si obtuleritis cæcum ad immolandum, non malum est? et si claudum vel mutilum obtuleritis, non malum est? Offer hoc nunc (*vel*, agedum, *vel*, quæso; ℵ) *dubiæ est significationis*, offer *ergo*, obsecro, hoc) præfecto tuo, an complacebit ei in te, vel suscipiet faciem tuam, dicit Iehova exercituum?

God has already proved that he had by many favours been a Father to the Jews. They must have felt that he had indeed bound them to himself, provided they possessed any religion or gratitude. He now then concludes his address to them, as though he had said, that he had very ill bestowed all the blessings he had given them; and he adopts two similitudes; he first compares himself to a father, and then to a master. He says, that in these two respects he had a just cause to complain of the Jews; for he had been a father to them, but they did not in their turn conduct themselves as children, in a submissive and obedient manner, as they ought to have done. And farther, he became their master, but they shook off the yoke, and allowed not themselves to be ruled by his authority.

As to the word, Father, we have already shown that the Jews were not only in common with others the children of God, but had been also chosen as his peculiar people. Their adoption then made them God's children above all other nations; for when they differed nothing from the rest of the world, God adopted them. With regard to the right and

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power of a master, God, in the first place, held them bound to him as the Creator and former of the whole world; but he also, as it is well known, attained the right by redemption. That he might then enhance their crime, he not only expostulates with them for having abused his favours, but he charges them also with obstinacy, because they disobeyed his authority, while yet he was their Lord.

He says, that a *son honours his father, and a servant* his *master*. He applies the same verb to both clauses; but he afterwards makes a difference, ascribing honour to a father and fear to a master. As to the first clause, we know that whenever there is authority, there ought to be honour; and when masters are over servants, they ought to be honoured. But in a subsequent clause he speaks more distinctly, and says, that a master ought to be feared by a servant, while honour is due to a father from a son. For servants do not love their masters; not being able to escape from their power, they fear them: but the reverence which sons have for their fathers, is more generous and more voluntary. But God shows here, that the Jews could by no means be kept to their duty, though so many favours ought to have made it their sweet delight. God had indeed conciliated them as much as possible to himself, but all was without any benefit. The majesty also of God ought to have struck them with fear. It was then the same, as though he had said, that they were of so perverse a nature, that they could not be led to obedience either by a kind and gracious invitation, or by an authoritative command.

The Lord then complains that he was deprived by the Jews of the honour which sons owe to their fathers, as well as of the fear which servants ought to have for their masters; and thus he shows that they were like untameable wild beasts, which cannot be tamed by any kind treatment, nor subdued by scourges, or by any kind of castigation.

He then adds, *To you, O priests.* It is certain that this complaint ought not to be confined to the priests alone, since God, as we have seen, speaks generally of the whole race of Abraham: for he had said that Levi was advanced to the sacerdotal honour, while the other brethren were passed by;

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but he had said also, that Jacob was chosen when Esau was rejected; and this belonged in common to the twelve tribes. Now it ought not, and it could not, be confined to the tribe of Levi, that God was their father or their master. Why then does he now expressly address the priests? They ought indeed to have been leaders and teachers to the rest of the people, but he does not on this account exempt the whole people from blame or guilt, though he directs his discourse to the priests; for his object was to show that all things had become so corrupt among the people, that the priests were become as it were the chief in contempt of religion and in sacrileges, and in every kind of pollution. It hence follows that there was nothing sound and right in the community; for when the eyes themselves are without light, they cannot discharge their duty to the body, and what at length will follow?

God then no doubt shows that great corruptions prevailed and had spread so much among the people, that they who ought to have been examples to others, had especially shaken off the yoke and given way to unbridled licentiousness. This then is the reason why the Prophet condemns the priests, though at the beginning he included the whole people, as it is evident from the context.

We must at the same time bear in mind what we have elsewhere said—that the fault of the people was not lessened because the sin of the priest was the most grievous; but that all were involved in the same ruin; for God in this case did not absolve the common people, inasmuch as they were guilty of the same sins; but he shows that the most grievous fault belonged to the teachers, who had not reproved the people, but on the contrary increased licentiousness by their dissimulation, as we shall presently find again.

He says that they *despised* his *name;* not that the fear of God prevailed in others, but that it was the duty of the priests to reprove the impiety of the whole people. As then they allowed to others so much liberty, it appeared quite evident that the name of God was but little esteemed by them; for had they possessed true zeal, they would not have suffered the worship of God to be trodden under foot

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or profaned, as we shall presently find to have been the case.

It then follows, *Ye have said, In what have we despised thy name?* As the Prophet at the beginning indirectly touched on the hypocrisy and perverseness of the people, so he now no doubt repeats the same thing by using a similar language: for how was it that the priests as well as the people asked a question on a plain matter, as though it were obscure, except that they were blind to their own vices? Now the cause of blindness is hypocrisy, and then, as it is wont to do, it brings with it perverseness; for all who deceive themselves, dare even to raise their horns against God, and petulantly to clamour that he too severely treats them; for the Prophet doubtless does not here relate their words, except for the purpose of showing that they had such a brazen front and so hard a neck, that they boldly repelled all reproofs. We see at this day in the world the same sottishness; for though the crimes reproved are sufficiently known, yet they, even the most wicked, immediately object and say that wrong is done to them; and they will not acknowledge a fault except they be a hundred times convicted, and even then they will make some pretence. And truly were there not daily proofs to teach us how refractory men are towards God, the thing would be incredible. The Prophet then did no doubt by this cutting expression goad and also wound the people as well as the priests, intimating that so gross was their hypocrisy, that they dared to make shifts, when their crimes were openly known to all.

Ye have said then, *by what have we despised thy name?* They inquired as though they had rubbed their forehead, and then gained boldness, "What does this mean? for thou accusest us here of being wicked and sacrilegious, but we are not conscious of any wrong." Then the answer is given in God's name, *Ye offer on mine altar polluted bread.* A question may be here asked, "Ought this to have been imputed to the priests as a crime; for had victims been offered, such as God in his law commanded, it would have been to the advantage and benefit of the priests; and had fine corn been brought, it would have been advantageous to the priests?"

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But it seems to me probable, that the priests are condemned because like hungry and famished men they seized indiscriminately on all things around them. Some think that the priests grossly and fraudulently violated the law by changing the victims—that when a fat ram was offered, the priests, as they suppose, took it away, and put in its place a ram that was lean, or lame, or mutilated. But this view appears not to me suitable to the passage. Let us then regard the meaning to be what I have stated—that God here contends with the whole people, but that he directs his reproofs to the priests, because they were in two ways guilty, for they formed a part of the people, and they also suffered God to be dishonoured; for what could have been more disgraceful than to offer polluted victims and polluted bread?

If it be now asked, whether this ought to have been ascribed as a fault to the priests, the answer is this—that the people then were not very wealthy; for they had but lately returned from exile, and they had not brought with them much wealth, and the land was desolate and uncultivated: as, then, there was so much want among the people, and they were intent, each on his advantage, according to what we have seen in the Prophet Haggai, (ch. i. 4,) and neglected the temple of God and their sacrifices, there is no doubt but that they wished anyhow to discharge their duty towards God, and therefore brought beasts which were either lame or blind; and hence the whole worship of God was vitiated, their sacrifices being polluted. The priests ought to have rejected all these, and to have closed up God's temple, rather than to have received indiscriminately what God had prohibited. As then this indifference of the people was nothing but a profanation of divine worship, the priests ought to have firmly opposed it. But as they themselves were hungry, they thought it better to lay hold on everything around them—"What," they said, "will become of us? for if we reject these sacrifices, however vicious they may be, they will offer nothing; and thus we shall starve, and there will be no advantage; and we shall be forced in this case to open and to close the temple, and to offer sacrifices at our own

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expense, and we are not equal to this burden." Since then the priests spared the people for private gain, our Prophet justly reproves them, and says, *ye offer polluted bread.*

It was indeed the office of the priests to place bread daily on the table; but whence could bread be obtained except some were offered? Now nothing was lost to the priests, when they daily set bread before God, for they presently received it; and thus they preferred, as it was more to their advantage, to offer bread well approved, made of fine flour: but as I have said, their own convenience interposed, for they thought that they could not prevail with the people—"If we irritate these men, they will deny that they have anything to offer; and thus the temple will be empty, and our own houses will be empty; it is then better to take coarse bread from them than nothing; we shall at least feed our families and servants with this bread, after having offered it to the Lord." We hence see how the fault belonged to the priests, when the people offered polluted bread, and unapproved victims.

I have hitherto explained the Prophet's words with reference chiefly to the shew-bread; not that they ought to be so strictly taken as many interpreters have considered them; for under the name of bread is included, we know, every kind of eatables; so it seems probable to me that the word ought to be extended to all the sacrifices; but one kind is here mentioned as an example; and it seems also that what immediately follows is added as an explanation—*ye offer the lame and the blind and the mutilated.* Since these things are connected together, I have no doubt but that God means by bread here every kind of offering, and we know that the shew-bread was not offered on the altar; but there was a table by itself appointed for this purpose near the altar. And why God designates by bread all the sacrifices may be easily explained; for God would have sacrifices offered to him as though he had his habitation and table among the Jews; it was not indeed his purpose to fill their minds with gross imaginations, as though he did eat or drink, as we know that heathens have been deluded with such notions; but his design was only to remind the Jews of that domes-

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tic habitation which he had chosen for himself among them. But more on this subject shall presently be said; I shall now proceed to consider the words.

Ye offer on my altar polluted bread; and ye have said, *In what have we polluted thee?* The priests again answer as though God unjustly accused them; for they allege their innocency, as the question is to be regarded here as a denial: *In what* then *have we polluted thee?* They deny that they were rightly condemned, inasmuch as they had duly served God. But we may hence conclude, according to what has been before stated, that the people were under the influence of gross hypocrisy, and had become hardened in their obstinacy. It is the same at this day; though there be such a mass of crimes, which everywhere prevails in the world, and even overflows the earth, yet no one will bear to be condemned; for every one looks on others, and thus when no less grievous sins appear in others, every one absolves himself. This is then the sottishness which the Prophet again goads—*Ye have said, In what have we polluted thee?* He and other Prophets no doubt charged the Jews with this sacrilege—that they polluted the name of God.

But it deserves to be known, that few think that they pollute God and his name when they worship him superstitiously or formally, as though they had to do with a child: but we see that God himself declares, that the whole of religion is profaned, and that his name is shamefully polluted when men thus trifle with him.

He answers, *when ye said,* literally, in your saying, *The table of Jehovah, it is contemptible.* Here the Prophet discovers the fountain of their sin; and he shows as it were by the finger, that they had despised those rites which belonged to the worship of God. The reason follows, *If ye offer the blind,* he says, *for sacrifice, it is no evil.* Some read the last clause as a question, "is it not evil?" but ה, *he,* the mark of a question, is not here; and we may easily gather from the context that the Prophet as yet relates how presumptuously both the priests and the whole people thought they could be acquitted and obtain pardon for themselves, "It is no evil thing if the lame be offered, if the

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blind be offered, if the maimed be offered; there is nothing evil in all this."[1] We now then understand what the Prophet means.

But the subject would have been obscure had not a fuller explanation been given in these words, *The table of Jehovah, it is contemptible.*[2] God does here show, as I have before stated, why he was so much displeased with the Jews. Nothing is indeed so precious as his worship; and he had instituted under the law sacrifices and other rites, that the children of Abraham might exercise themselves in worshipping him spiritually It was then the same as though he had said, that he cared nothing for sheep and calves, and for any thing of that kind, but that their impiety was sufficiently manifested, inasmuch as they did not think that the whole of religion was despised when they despised the external acts of worship according to the law. God then brings back the attention of the Jews from brute animals to himself, as though he had said, "Ye offer to me lame and blind animals, which I have forbidden to be offered; that you act unfaithfully towards me is sufficiently apparent; and if ye say that these are small things and of no moment, I answer, that you ought to have regarded the end for which I designed that sacrifices should be offered to me, and ordered bread to be laid on my table in the sanctuary; for by these tokens you ought to have known that I live in the midst of you, and that whatever ye eat or drink is sacred to me, and that all you possess comes to you through my bounty. As then this end for which sacrifices have been appointed has been

[1] It is rather an ironical language, as it will appear from the following literal version—

8. And when ye bring the blind for a sacrifice, no evil!
And when ye bring the lame and the sick, no evil!
Offer, it, I pray, to thy governor;
Will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person,
Saith Jehovah of hosts?

The whole is in the strain of irony; and the first lines are much more striking than when the interrogative particle is introduced. So is the rendering of the *Septuagint*, οὐ κακὸν—no evil. It was the *Targum* that introduced the interrogative form.—*Ed.*

[2] So ought this sentence to be rendered; and it is thus rendered by *Newcome*, only for "contemptible" he has "despicable," while *Henderson* retains the former, as it is in our version.—*Ed.*

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neglected by you, it is quite evident that ye have no care nor concern for true religion.

We now then perceive why the Prophet objects to the priests, that they had called the table of Jehovah contemptible; not that they had spoken thus expressly, but because they had regarded it almost as nothing to pervert and adulterate the whole of divine worship according to the law, which was an evidence of religion when there was any.

Now it may seem strange, that God one while so strictly requires pure sacrifices and urges the observance of them, when yet at another time he says that he does not seek sacrifices, "Sacrifice I desire not, but mercy," (Hos. vi. 6;) and again, "Have I commanded your fathers when I delivered them from Egypt, to offer victims to me? With this alone was I content, that they should obey my voice." He says afterwards in Micah, "Shall I be propitious to you if ye offer me all your flocks? but rather, O man, humble thyself before thy God." (Mic. vi. 6.) The same is said in the fiftieth Psalm, in the first and the last chapters of Isaiah, and in many other places. Since then God elsewhere depreciates sacrifices, and shows that they are not so highly esteemed by him, why does he now so rigidly expostulate with the Jews, because they offered lame and maimed animals? I answer, that there was a reason why God should by this reproof discover the impiety of the people. Had all their victims been fat or well fed, our Prophet would have spoken as we find that others have done; but since their faithlessness had gone so far that they showed even to children that they had no regard for the worship of God—since they had advanced so far in shamelessness, it was necessary that they should be thus convicted of impiety; and hence he says, *ye offer to me polluted bread*, as though he had said, "I supply you with food, it was your duty to offer to me the first-fruits, the tenths, and the shew-bread; and the design of these external performances is, that they may regard themselves as fed by me daily, and also that they may feed moderately and temperately on the bread and flesh and other things given them, as though they were sitting at my table: for when they see that bread made from the same corn is before

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the presence of God, this ought to come to their minds, 'it is God's will, as though he lived with us, that a portion of the same bread should ever be set on the holy table:' and then when they offer victims, they are not only to be thus stirred up to repentance and faith, but they ought also to acknowledge that all these are sacred to God, for when they set before the altar either a calf, or an ox, or a lamb, and then see the animal sacrificed, (a part of which remains for the priests,) and the altar sprinkled with blood, they ought to think thus within themselves, 'Behold, we have all these things in common with God, as though clothed in a human form he dwelt with us and took the same food and the same drink.' They ought then to have performed in this manner their outward rites."

God now justly complains, that his table was contemptible, as though he had said, that his favour was rejected, because the people, as it were in contempt, brought coarse bread, as though they wished to feed some swineherd,—a conduct similar to that mentioned in Zechariah, when God said, that a reward was offered for him as though he were some worthless hireling, (Zech. ii. 12;)—"I have carefully fed you," he says, "and I now demand my reward: ye give for me thirty silverings, a mean and disgraceful price." So also in this place, *Ye have said, the table of Jehovah,* it is polluted. There is an emphasis in the pronoun; for God shows that he by no means deserved such a reproach: "Who am I, that ye should thus despise my table? I have consecrated it, that ye might have a near access to me, as though I dwelt in the visible sanctuary; but ye have despised my table as though I were nothing."

He afterwards adds, *Offer this now to thy governor; will he be pleased with thee?* God here complains that less honour is given to him than to mortals; for he adduces this comparison, "When any one owes a tribute or tax to a governor, and brings any thing maimed or defective, he will not receive it." Hence he draws this inference, that he was extremely insulted, for the Jews dared to offer him what every mortal would reject. He thus reasons from the less to the greater, that this was not a sacrilege that could be borne,

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as the Jews had so presumptuously abused his kindness; and hence he subjoins—

9. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts.	9. Et nunc deprecamini quæso faciem Dei, et miserabitur nostri; (e manu vestra factum est hoc;) an suscipiet ex vobis faciem, dicit Iehova exercituum.

He wounds here the priests more grievously,—because they had so degenerated as to be wholly unworthy of their honourable office and title; "Go," he says, "and *entreat the face of God.*" All this is ironical; for interpreters are much mistaken who think that the Prophet here exhorts the priests humbly to ask pardon from God, both for themselves and for the people. On the contrary, he addresses them, as I have said, ironically, while telling them to be intercessors and mediators between God and the people; and yet they were profane men, who on their part polluted the whole worship of God, and thus subverted the whole of religion: go thou and *entreat,* he says, *the face of God.* This duty, we know, was enjoined on the priests; they were to draw nigh to the sanctuary and present themselves before God as though they were advocates pleading the cause of the people, or at least intercessors to pacify God. Since then they were in this respect the types of Christ, it behoved them to strive themselves to be holy; and though the people abandoned themselves to all kinds of wickedness, it yet became the priests to devote themselves with all reverence to the duties of their calling; and as God had preferred them to their brethren, they ought especially to have consecrated themselves to him with all fear; for the more excellent their condition was, the more eminent ought to have been their piety and holiness. Justly then does the Prophet here inveigh so severely against them, because they did not consider that they were honoured with the priesthood, that they might entreat God, and thus pacify his wrath, and reconcile to him miserable men: Go, he says, and *entreat the face of God;* forsooth! *he will accept your face.* We now understand the real meaning of the Prophet.

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And now, he says, *he will have mercy on us.* Here also the Prophet derides them, because they boasted that they could prevail through their own high dignity to render God propitious; forsooth! he says, *he will have mercy on us.* But *this is done by your hand*, [*i. e.*, by you.] "Do ye raise up your hands to God? and will he on seeing you be pacified towards you? As then ye are polluted, ye are unworthy of the honour and office, in which ye so proudly glory."

He does not however, as we have already said, extenuate the fault of the people, and much less does he exempt them from guilt who were implicated in the same crimes; but he shows that the state of things was wholly desperate; for the common people disregarded God, and the priests, neglecting to make any distinctions, received every sort of victims, only that they might not be in want: he shows them that the state of the people was extremely bad, as there was no one who could, according to what his office required, pacify God. *Will he* then *receive your face?* The Prophet seems to allude to the person of the Mediator; for as Christ had not as yet appeared, when the priest presented himself before the altar, it was the same as though God looked on the face of one, and became thus propitious to all. On this account he says, that the priests were not worthy that God should look on them, since they had polluted his sanctuary and corrupted his whole service.[1] For the same purpose he subjoins—

[1] It is generally admitted that this verse is ironical. The second line has been differently interpreted: some regard the impure sacrifices before mentioned as being referred to, "from your hand have these come," following the *Septuagint*, where מאת is rendered "ταυτα—these:" but the most obvious meaning is that given by *Calvin*, that the sentence is a concession as to what the priests are ironically exhorted to do. I give the following version,—

And now, intreat now God's face that he may favour us!
By you (*lit.* by your hand) has this been done:
Will he on your account lift up the face?
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

To "lift up the face" is to show favour. The words seem to be spoken by the Prophet, and by saying, "saith Jehovah," at the end, he identifies what he says with the mind of God, as though he said that what he addressed to them was communicated to him from above. Instead of מכם, "on your account," some MSS. have לכם, "for you," or "for your sake." —*Ed.*

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10. Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought?* neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

10. Quis etiam in vobis qui claudat ostia, et non incenditis altare meum gratis? non mihi placet in vobis, dicit Iehova exercituum; et oblationem non habebo gratam e manu vestra.

He goes on with the same subject,—that the priests conducted themselves very shamefully in their office, and that the people had become hardened through their example, so that the whole of religion was disregarded. Hence he says, that the *doors* were not closed by them. Some interpreters connect the two things together—that they closed not the doors of the temple, nor kindled the altar for nothing; and thus they apply the adverb חִנָּם, *chenam*, to both clauses; as though he had said, that they were hirelings, who did not freely devote themselves to serve God, but looked for profit and gain in everything: and this is the commonly received explanation.[1] But it seems better to me to take them separately and to say, *Who does even shut the doors?* not however for nothing, and the copulative וְ, *vau*, as in many other places, may be rendered *even:* and yet *ye kindle not for nothing my altar;* as though God had said, "I have fixed your works; ye are then to me as hired

[1] Adopted by *Jerome*, *Cyril*, and in our version, and by *Henry*, *Scott*, *Adam Clarke*, and *Henderson*. But *Marckius* takes another view, previously taken by *Drusius*, *Gataker*, and *Cocceius*, according to the following version—

Who is there moreover among you? let him even close the doors,
That ye may not kindle my altar in vain.

"What he seems to say is this," observes *Drusius*, "I wish there were some one so inflamed by a pious zeal, as to close the doors, and thus to exclude all unlawful sacrifices." To kindle or light the altar was to light the fire under it to consume the sacrifice. The *Targum* favours "in vain," or to no purpose, "Offer ye not on my altar an execrable oblation." The word חִנָּם is used in both senses—"for nothing" or without gain, Gen. xxix. 15; Exod. xxi. 2,—and "in vain" or uselessly, Prov. i. 27; Ezek. vi. 10.

It is difficult to know which of these views is the right one. What seems against our version is the negative לֹא in the second line. The sense given would be better brought out without it; and so *Jerome* leaves it out in his explanation. The form also of the sentence being changed renders it improbable that חִנָּם belongs to the former clause. The version of *Drusius* comes nearest to the original, and is countenanced by the *Septuagint* and the *Targum*.—*Ed.*

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servants; and now since I have ordered a reward to be given to you whenever ye stand at my altar, why do ye not close my door?" Some render חנם, *chenam*, in vain, and give this explanation, "Who closes the doors? then kindle not afterwards in vain my altar;" as though God rejected the whole service, which had been corrupted by the avarice or the sloth of the priests, and by the presumption of the people.

It is indeed certain that it is better to separate the two clauses, so that the adverb חנם, *chenam*, may be confined to the letter; but there may yet, as I have said, be a twofold meaning. If we render חנם, *chenam*, in vain, the import is that the Prophet declares that they laboured to no purpose, while they thus sacrificed to God contrary to his law, for they ought to have attended especially to the rule prescribed to them: as then they despised this, he justly says, "Offer not to me in vain;" and thus the future tense is to be taken for the imperative, as we know is the case sometimes in Hebrew.

But no interpreter seems to have sufficiently considered the reason why the Prophet speaks of not closing the doors of the temple. The priests, we know, were set over the temple for this reason—that nothing polluted might be admitted; for there were of the Levites some doorkeepers, and others stood at the entrance; in short, all had their stations: and then when they had brought in the victim it was the office of the priests to examine it and to see that it was such as the law of God required. As then it was their special office to see that nothing polluted should be received into the temple of God, he justly complains here that they indiscriminately received what was faulty and profane: hence he rightly declares (for this seems to me to be the true exposition) "Offer not in vain." He then draws the conclusion, that the priests lost all their labour in thus sacrificing, because God would not have his name profaned, and justly preferred obedience to all sacrifices. He therefore denies that they did any good in slaying victims, because they ought in the first place to have attended to this—not

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to change anything in God's word and not to deviate from it in the least. But I cannot now proceed farther.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased in thine infinite mercy not only to choose from among us some to be priests to thee, but also to consecrate us all to thyself in thine only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we at this day may purely and sincerely serve thee, and so strive to devote ourselves wholly to thee, that we may be pure and chaste in mind, soul, and body, and that thy glory may so shine forth in all our performances, that thy worship among us may be holy, and pure, and approved by thee, until we shall at length enjoy that glory to which thou invitest us by thy gospel, and which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-second.

I COULD not yesterday finish the complaint which God made against the priests—that no one of them closed the doors of the temple, so that it might continue pure from all defilements; for as their avarice was insatiable, they indiscriminately admitted all sorts of profanations: hence he comes to this conclusion—"Offer not hereafter in vain;" for by saying, *Kindle not my altar*, he means that they spent their toil to no purpose in offering sacrifices, because God required his worship to be performed according to the prescription of his law. I omit now the two other expositions I mentioned yesterday; for it seems to me that the Prophet meant, that the priests wearied themselves in vain while daily offering victims, because the Lord repudiated their service as impure and vicious.

He now adds, *I am not pleased with you,*[1] *and an offering I will not accept from your hand.* In the first clause he says that they were not approved by God, or did not please him; and then he adds, that their offerings were rejected; for where there is no pure heart, there we know all works

[1] Literally it is—"Not to me *is* delight in you," *i.e.*, I have no delight in you.—*Ed.*

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are impure. For we must remember what Moses says—that Abel pleased God together with his sacrifices, (Gen. iv. 4;) and we have seen in another Prophet, that is Haggai, that what is highly esteemed by men is an abomination to God, when he is not worshipped in sincerity and truth, (Hag. ii. 15.) Our Prophet now means the same thing—*I am not pleased with you, and I regard not as acceptable the victims from your hand.* It now follows—

11. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

11. Quia (*vel*, certè) ab ortu solis usque ad occasum magnum nomen meum inter gentes; et in omni loco suffitus offertur nomini meo, et oblatio munda; quia (*vel*, certè, *est eadem particula* כִּי) magnum nomen meum inter gentes, dicit Iehova exercituum.

Here God shows that he no longer cared for the Jews, for he would bid altars to be reared for him everywhere and through all parts of the world, that he might be purely worshipped by all nations. It is indeed a remarkable prophecy as to the calling of the Gentiles; but we must especially remember this,—that whenever the Prophets speak of this calling, they promise the spread of God's worship as a favour to the Jews, or as a punishment and reproach.

The Prophets then promised to the Jews that the Gentiles would become allied to them; so does Zechariah, "In that day lay hold shall ten men on the skirt of the garment, and will say to a Jew, Be thou our leader; for the same God with thee will we worship." (Zech. viii. 23.) It would have been then the highest honour to the Jews had they become teachers to all nations, so as to instruct them in true religion. So also Isaiah says, that is, that those who were before aliens would become the disciples of the chosen people, so that they would willingly submit to their teaching. But as the Jews have fallen from their place, the Gentiles have succeeded and occupied their position. Hence it is that the Prophets when speaking of the calling of the Gentiles, often denounce it as a punishment on the Jews; as though they had said, that when they were repudiated there would be other children of God, whom he would substitute in their place, ac-

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cording to what Christ threatened to the men of his age, "Taken away from you shall be the kingdom of God, and shall be given to another nation." (Matt. xxi. 43.)

Such is this prophecy: for our Prophet does not simply open to the Gentiles the temple of God, to connect them with the Jews and to unite them in true religion; but he first excludes the Jews, and shows that the worship of God would be exercised in common by the Gentiles, for the doctrine of salvation would be propagated to the utmost extremities of the earth.

This difference ought to be noticed, which interpreters have not observed, and yet it is what is very necessary to be known; and for want of knowing this has it happened that passages wholly different have been indiscriminately blended together. The Prophet then does not here promise, as we have often stated in other places, that the whole world would be subject to God, so that true religion would everywhere prevail, but he brands the Jews with reproach, as though he had said, "God has repudiated you, but he will find other sons for himself, who will occupy your place." He had repudiated in the last verse their sacrifices, and we know how haughtily the Jews gloried in the holiness of their race. As then they were inflated with so much pride, they thought that God would be no God except he had them as his holy Church. The Prophet here answers them, and anticipates their objection by saying, that God's name would be celebrated through the whole world: "Ye are a few people, all the nations will unite in one body to worship God together; God then will not stand in need of you, and after he rejects you his kingdom will not decay. Ye indeed think that his kingdom cannot be safe, and that his glory will perish except he is worshipped by you; but I now declare to you, that the worship of God will flourish everywhere, even after he shall cast you out of his family."

We now then see what the Prophet means when he says, that *Great will be the name of God from the rising to the setting of the sun.*[1] It is simply said in Ps. cxiii. 3, "From

[1] The verse begins with כִּי, which *Calvin* suggests may be rendered "certè—surely," or verily; and this would be most suitable here—

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the rising to the setting of the sun wonderful shall be the name of God." There indeed it is only a promise, but here the Prophet includes the punishment which the Jews had deserved, as though he had said, that after they were rejected by God on account of their ingratitude, the Gentiles would become holy to God, because he would adopt them instead of that wicked and ungodly people.

But I have said, that the calling of the Gentiles is here clearly proved, or may with certainty be elicited from this prophecy, for this reason, because the name of God cannot be great without the teaching of the truth. It is therefore the same thing as though the Prophet had said, that the law which had been given to the Jews would be proclaimed among all nations, so that true religion might spread everywhere: for the basis of true religion is to know how he is to be worshipped by us, inasmuch as obedience is better than all sacrifices. And it is necessary always to begin with this principle—to know the God whom we worship: and hence Christ himself, in the fourth chapter of John, condemns all the religions which then prevailed in the world, because men presumptuously worshipped gods devised by themselves. Since then it is necessary that the worship of God should be based on the truth, when God declares that his name would become renowned in every place, he doubtless shows that his law would be known to all nations, so that his will might be known everywhere, which is, as we have said, the only rule of true religion.

He afterwards adds—*Everywhere shall be offered incense to my name, and a clean offering.* Why? Because *my name*

> Verily, from the rising of the sun to its setting,
> Great *shall be* my name among the nations;
> And in every place incense *shall be* brought
> To my name, and a pure offering:
> Verily, great *shall be* my name
> Among the nations, saith Jehovah of hosts.

The *Septuagint* render the first part as past, "glorified has been my name;" and the second in the present, "is brought." But the future is intended, as the last verb is in that tense, "I will not accept:" for when there is no verb in a sentence, and the auxiliary verb is understood, as is often the case in Hebrew, the tense is regulated by the context. "I will not accept your offering, but an offering shall be brought to me," not has been or is, but shall be.—*Ed.*

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shall be great. The repetition is not useless; for it was a thing then incredible, inasmuch as God had not in vain separated the Jews from the rest of the world; nor was it an ordinary commendation, when Moses said in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy—"Show me a nation to whom God draws nigh as he does to you: this then is your nobility and your excellency, to have a God nigh and friendly to you." Hence also it is said in Psalm cxlvii. 20—"He has not done thus to other nations; his judgments has he not made known to them." It was then the peculiar privilege of the race of Abraham that God was known and worshipped by them. The very novelty, then, of what is here said might have closed the door against this prophecy; and this is the reason why the Prophet repeatedly confirms what it was then difficult to believe—*the name of God,* he says, *shall be great in every place.*

We must also bear in mind that God cannot be rightly worshipped except he is known, which Paul confirms when he says—"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" for except the truth shines forth, we shall grope like the blind, and wander through devious ways. There is therefore no religion approved by God except what is based on his word.

Moreover the Prophet, by מנחה, *meneche,* offering, and by incense, means the worship of God; and this mode of speaking is common in the Scriptures, for the Prophets who were under the law accommodated their expressions to the comprehension of the people. Whenever then they intend to show that the whole world would come to the faith and true religion—"An altar," they say, "shall be built to God;" and by altar they no doubt meant spiritual worship, and not that after Christ's coming sacrifices ought to be offered. For now there is no altar for us; and whosoever builds an altar for himself subverts the cross of Christ, on which he offered the only true and perpetual sacrifice.

It then follows that this mode of speaking ought to be so taken, that we may understand the analogy between the legal rites, and the spiritual manner of worshipping God now prescribed in the gospel. Though then the words of the

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Prophet are metaphorical, yet their meaning is plain enough —that God will be worshipped and adored everywhere. But what are the sacrifices of the New Testament? They are prayers and thanksgivings, according to what the Apostle says in the last chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. There was also under the law the spiritual worship of God, as it is especially stated in the fiftieth psalm; but there were then shadows connected with it, as it is intimated in these words of Christ—"Now is come the hour when the Father shall be worshipped in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 13.) He does not indeed deny that God was worshipped in spirit by the fathers; but as that worship was concealed under outward rites, he says that now under the gospel the simple, and, so to speak, the naked truth is taught. What then the Prophet says of offering and incense availed under the law; but we must now see what God commands in his gospel, and how he would have us to worship him. We do not find there any incense or sacrifices.

This passage contains nothing else than that the time would come when the pure and spiritual worship of God would prevail in all places.

And thus it appears how absurd are the Papists, when they hence infer that God cannot be worshipped without some kind of sacrifice; and on this ground they defend the impiety of their mass, as though it were the sacrifice of which the Prophet speaks. But nothing can be more foolish and puerile; for the Prophet, as we have said, adopts a mode of speaking common in Scripture. And were we to allow offering and incense to be taken here literally, how could מנחה, *meneche*, offering, be the body and blood of Christ? "Oh!" they say, "it is a sacrifice made of bread, and wine was added. Oh! Christ has thus commanded." But where has he said "sacrifice?"[1] They again deny that it is bread? for they say that it is transubstantiated into the body of Christ: now then it is not a sacrifice of bread, nor of fine flour; for the form only, visible to the eyes, and

[1] As an instance of a gradual deviation from the truth, *Justin Martyr*, in the second century, rendered the word "incense," θυσια, a sacrifice, while in the *Septuagint* it is θυμιαμα, incense.

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without substance, remains, as they imagine. There is in the meantime no reason for us carefully to discuss a subject so clear; for as we have seen in Joel—"In the last days I will pour my Spirit on all flesh, and prophesy shall your sons and your daughters; your old men dreams shall dream, and your young men visions shall see." (Joel ii. 28.) So also we find what is similar in this place; for the Apostles, though not taught by visions, were yet we know illuminated; and then visions were not given commonly at the commencement of the gospel, nor dreams; they were indeed very rare things. What then does Paul mean? For he speaks of the whole body of the Church, as though he had said that all, from the least to the greatest, would be Prophets. Did they become Prophets by visions and dreams, whom God illuminated by the doctrine of the gospel? By no means. But Joel, as I have said, accommodated what he said to the time of the law. So also in this place the Prophet, by offering and incense, designates the spiritual worship of God. Let us now proceed—

12. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.

12. Et vos polluistis illud, quum dicitis, Mensa Iehovæ polluta est; et proventus ejus (*vel*, fructus; *alii vertunt*, sermonem) contemptibilis cibus ejus.

This verse may be confined to the priests, or it may be extended to the whole people; for both views are appropriate. As to my own view, I doubt not but that the Prophet here reproves with additional severity the priests, and that at the same time he extends his reproof to the people in general. We saw in our yesterday's lecture how religion had been polluted by the priests, and how impiously they had profaned the worship of God: but this was the general sin of the whole people, as we shall presently see. Let us then know that the whole people, as well as the priests, are here reproved: but as a crime in the priests was more grievous, they being the occasion of sacrilege to others, the Prophet assails them in an especial manner, *Ye*, he says, *have polluted my name.*

He gives a reason, and at the same time enhances their guilt: for they might have complained, that God not only

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put them on a level with the Gentiles, but also rejected them, and substituted aliens in their place. He shows that God had a just cause for disinheriting them, and for adopting the Gentiles as his children, for they had polluted God's name. He at the same time amplifies their sin, when he says, "The Gentiles, by whom I have been hitherto despised, and to whom my name was not made known, will soon come to the faith; thus my name shall be great, it shall be reverently worshipped by all nations; but ye have polluted it." It was certainly very strange, that the Jews, peculiarly chosen and illuminated by the doctrine of the Law, so presumptuously polluted God's worship, as though they despised him, and that the Gentiles, being novices, rendered obedience to God as soon as they tasted of the truth of religion, so that his glory became through them illustrious.

He afterwards shows how the name of God was polluted, *Ye say, The table of Jehovah is polluted;* that is, ye distinguish not between what is sacred and profane: for he repeats what we noticed yesterday,—that the Jews thought it a frivolous matter, when the Prophets taught them that God was to be worshipped with all reverence. It is not however probable, that they openly uttered such a blasphemy as that the table of God was polluted; but it is easy to conclude from what is said, that God's table was profaned by them, for they made no account of it. The holiness of the table ought to have been so regarded by the Jews, as not to approach the sanctuary without true repentance and faith; they ought to have known that they had to do with God, and that his majesty ought to have deeply touched them. When therefore they came to the temple, and brought with them their uncleanness like swine, it was quite evident that they had no reverence for the temple, or the altar, or the table. According to this sense then are the words of the Prophet to be understood,—not that the Jews openly mocked God, but that the holiness of the temple was with them of no account.

With regard to the *Table,* we stated yesterday, that when God ordered sacrifices to be offered to him, it was the same as though he familiarly dwelt among the Jews, and became

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as it were their companion. It was the highest honour and an instance of God's ineffable goodness, that he thus condescended, so that the people might know that he was not to be sought afar off. And for this reason the less excusable was their impiety, as they did not consider that sacrifices were celebrated on earth, that their minds might be raised up above the heavens: for it is to this purpose that God descends to us, even to raise us above, as we have elsewhere stated. It was then an extremely base and shameful senselessness and stupidity in the Jews, that they did not consider that God's table was set among them, that they might by faith penetrate into heaven, and know it to be even before their eyes.

As to the words, *Its fruit is his contemptible food*, we must observe, that some render נִיב, *nib*, word, and bring this passage from Isaiah, "I have created the fruit of the lips, peace, peace," (Isaiah lvii. 19.) The verb נוּב, *nub*, means to fructify; hence נִיב, *nib*, is fruit or produce. Were we to grant that it is metaphorically taken for word, yet I see no reason why we should depart from its simple and real meaning. For first there will be a relative without an antecedent, נִיבוֹ, *nibu*, his word; and then there will be a change of number; for they apply it to the priests, *his word*, that is, the word of them—of whom? of the priests. It is common, I know, in Hebrew, to put a relative without an antecedent; but as I have said, nothing requires this here. The most suitable rendering then is, *Its provision*, that is, of the altar, *is the contemptible food* of God.[1] I take then the words to mean this, that a speech of this kind was often in the mouth of the people as well as of the priests,—"Oh! the provision

[1] And what is offered thereon, *even* its food, is despicable.—*Newcome.*
This is nearly the version of the *Septuagint.*
And its fruit, even his food, is contemptible.—*Henderson.*
The table of Jehovah, polluted it is and his (or, its) fruit; contemptible is his (or, its) food.—*Marckius.*
The last comes nearest to the original, and is the most obvious construction. The verse may be thus rendered:

But ye profane it by saying,
"The table of Jehovah,
Polluted is it and its fruit,
Contemptible is its food."—*Ed.*

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for the altar is any kind of meat; be not so anxious in your choice, so as to offer the best animals; for God is satisfied even with the lean and the maimed."

And here again God reproves the impiety and contempt of the people; and at the same time he condemns their avarice, because they took the worst of their animals to offer in the temple, as though they lost everything they consecrated to God.

Why he calls the sacrifices the *meat* or food of God, we now sufficiently understand. Only this ought to be observed, that the impiety of the people was evident, as they were so unconcerned in their duties; for God had not in vain instituted sacrifices and other rites. The contempt then of the signs openly showed not only the negligence of the people, but also their contempt of all religion. Were any one at this day to regard as nothing outward teaching and the sacraments, would he not prove himself to be an impious despiser of God? Yet religion, I allow, does not consist in these things; for though hypocrites pretend the most ardent zeal, they yet profane the name of God, whenever the truth sounds in their ears and the heart is not touched, and when they come to the Lord's table and are at the same time alienated from Christ. These things I allow; but as no true servant of God can despise these ordinances, which on account of our common infirmity are useful to us, and without which we cannot be as long as we sojourn in this world, whosoever derides our simplicity in frequenting God's house, or if silent abstains from doing so, and regards such a practice as nothing or as unimportant, he is thus, as I have said, proved guilty of impiety. This is the reason why the Prophet so sharply reproves the Jews, because they said that the provision for the altar was God's contemptible food. It follows—

13. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

13. Et dixistis, Ecce fatigatio (*alii vertunt*, Ecce ex fatigatione,) et sufflastis in illud, dicit Iehova exercituum; et obtulistis raptum et claudum et debile; et obtulistis Minchah (*hoc est*, oblationem;) an gratam hanc habebo è manu vestra, dicit Iehova.

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He pursues the same subject—that the worship of God was despised by them and regarded as almost worthless. We must bear in mind what I have before stated—that the Jews are not reprehended here as though they had openly and avowedly spoken reproachfully of God's worship; but that this was sufficiently evident from their conduct; for they allowed themselves so much licentiousness, that it was quite manifest that they were trifling with God, inasmuch as they had cast off every fear of him and all reverence towards him.

Ye have said, Behold, labour. This may apply to the whole people, or to the priests alone. It is commonly explained of the priests—that they complained that they had a hard office, because they were continually in the temple and constantly watched there, and were much occupied in cleaning the vessels.

The monks at this day under the Papacy, and the priests, boasting of themselves, say, "While all others sleep, we are watching; for we are constant in prayers." Forsooth! they howl at midnight in their temples; and then by massing and by doing other strange things they imagine that they are seriously engaged in pacifying God. In this sense do some understand this passage, as though the priests, in order to commend their work, alleged that they laboured much in God's service, and as though God had enjoined on them many and difficult things. But I prefer applying this to the whole people, and yet I do not exclude the priests; for the Prophet here condemns both, and shows that it was wearisome to them to spend labour in worshipping God, that they considered it weariness, as we commonly say, *Tu le fais par courvee.*[1]

[1] Variety of meanings has been given to the word מתלאה. *Calvin* takes it as one word with two letters added to לאה, to be weary or tired. But *Drusius*, *Marckius*, *Parkhurst*, *Henderson*, and others, regard it as a contraction for מה and תלאה, according to some other instances in Hebrew, and render it "What weariness!" and this corresponds with the context more than any other view. The *Septuagint* and the *Targum* considered the מ as a preposition, and this mistake has been followed by *Jerome* and the fathers, and also by *Grotius* and *Newcome*. "Behold, from weariness," or from labour, or from affliction: and it has been regarded as an excuse made by the priests on account of their poor and

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And the import of what follows is the same, *Ye have snuffed at it*, that is, through disdain. Some give this rendering, "With sorrow have ye moved him;" and the verb is in Hiphil, and is often taken in this sense. The verb נפח, *nephech*, is properly to snuff; and it is here in another conjugation; but even in Hiphil it has this meaning, and cannot be taken otherwise. Now they who render it, to move or touch with sorrow, are under the necessity of turning the words of the Prophet to a sense the most foreign and remote, even that the priests, extremely greedy of gain, compelled the common people to bring sacrifices, and thus extorted sacrifices, but not without sorrow and lamentation. We see how forced this is: I therefore wholly reject it. Some have hammered out a very refined sense, which is by no means suitable, "Ye have snuffed at it," that is, Ye have said indeed that the victims are good and sufficiently fat; and yet ye may by breath blow them into the air. Others render it, to cast down, because they threw the sacrifices on the ground. But what need there is of departing from the common meaning of the word, since it is easy to conclude that both the priests and the people are here condemned, because the worship of God was a weariness to them, as we snuff at a thing when it displeases us. The behaviour then of the fastidious is what the Prophet meant here to express. The

depressed condition. But there is nothing to countenance this notion in the context.

Calvin has adopted the past tense in this and the preceding verse, and so has *Henderson;* but *Marckius* and *Newcome*, with more correctness, render the verbs in the present tense, for they are all in this verse preceded by a conversive ו, *vau;* and the last line shows that the present time is intended,—

13. And ye say, "What weariness!"
And ye snuff at it, saith Jehovah of hosts;
And ye bring the torn, and the lame, and the sick,
When ye bring an offering:
Shall I accept it from your hand, saith Jehovah?

There are two evils ascribed to the priests—they were discontented with their office and performed it as a drudgery—and they allowed forbidden victims to be offered.

"Offering," מנחה, signifies a gift or a present, whether a victim or meat-offering. See Gen. iv. 2-5. Here evidently it comprehends "the torn," "the lame," &c., as it is clear from the words, "Shall I accept it?" that is, the offering, including those specified; for if it meant a meat-offering, as some suppose, non-acceptance would be confined to it alone.—*Ed.*

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passage will thus be very appropriate, Ye have said, *Behold weariness! Ye have snuffed at it:* then he adds,—

Ye have offered the torn, and the lame, and the weak. These words prove the same thing—that they performed their duty towards God in a trifling manner by offering improper victims: when they had anything defective or diseased, they said that it was sacred to God, as we find it stated in the next verse. Some improperly render גָּזוּל, *gazul*, a prey, what had been unjustly procured, as though he had said, that they offered victims obtained by plunder: but I wonder how they could thus distort the words of the Prophet without any pretence. He mentions here three kinds—the torn, the lame, and the maimed or the feeble. Who then does not see that the torn was an animal which had been torn by wild beasts? When therefore they had an animal half dead, having been torn by wolves, they thought that they had a suitable victim: "I am constrained to offer a sacrifice to God, this lamb is very suitable, for the wolf has devoured a part of it, and it has hardly escaped: as then it is maimed, I will bring it." The Prophet then calls those torn victims which had been lacerated by the teeth of wild beasts.

We now understand the import of the words; but we must remember what I have said—that God required not the performance of external rites, because he had need of meat and drink, or because he set a great value on these sacrifices, but on account of their design. The sacrifices then which God demanded from his ancient people had in themselves nothing that promoted true religion; nor could the odour of sacrifices of itself delight God; but the end was to be regarded. As then God ordered and commanded sacrifices to be offered to him, that he might exercise his people in penitence and faith, it was for this reason that he valued them. But when the people had fallen into gross contempt of them, that they brought to God, as it were to insult him, the maimed and the lame, their extremely base and intolerable impiety, as I have already said, was made fully evident. This is the reason why the Prophet now so vehemently chides the priests and the whole people; they

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offered to God such sacrifices as man would have rejected, according to what we noticed yesterday. It then follows—

14. But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I *am* a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.

14. Maledictus autem dolosus, qui dum est in grege sua masculus, et vovet et sacrificat corruptum Iehovæ; quia Rex magnus ego, dicit Iehova exercituum; et nomen meum terribile in gentibus.

I cannot finish to-day, for I should be too long.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou dost not keep us at this day under the shadows of the law, by which thou didst train up the race of Abraham, but invitest us to a service far more excellent, even to consecrate ourselves, body and soul, as victims to thee, and to offer not only ourselves, but also sacrifices of praise and of prayer, as thou hast consecrated all the duties of religion which thou requirest from us, through Christ thy Son,—O grant, that we may seek true purity, and labour to render, by a real sincerity of heart, our services approved by thee, and so reverently profess and call upon thy name, that really fulfilled in us may that be which thou hast declared by thy Prophet—that thy name shall be magnified and celebrated through the whole world, as it was truly made known to us in the person of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-third.

I REPEATED yesterday the last verse of the first chapter, but I did not explain it. The Prophet declares here, that all who dealt deceitfully and unfaithfully with God were under a curse; and at the same time he specifies the kind of fraud practised; they chose from the flock such as were diseased or defective to offer as sacrifices to God. It was indeed a proof of extreme dishonesty thus perversely to mock God: for as we have seen no man would bear such an insult. Then the Prophet, in order at once to complete what he had begun, distinctly says, that they were *all accursed.*

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The verb נכל, *necal*, means in Hebrew, to think; but it is taken almost at all times in a bad sense: hence interpreters have not improperly rendered it here, deceitful; but the deceit the Prophet meant to express is of this kind—when men craftily contrive for themselves vain pretences; for when they can cover their baseness before the world, they think that they are at the same time absolved in heaven. The Prophet then says, that they who think that they can escape God's judgment by such artifices are under a curse.

I come now to the kind of fraud they practised, *If there be*, he says, *in his flock a male*, that is, a lamb or a ram, *when he vows, then what is corrupt he offers to Jehovah.* He then means, that though they pretended some religion, yet nothing was done by them with a sincere and honest heart; for they immediately repented of the vow made to God; they thought that they might be reduced to poverty, if they were too bountiful in their sacrifices. Hence then the Prophet proves that they offered to God with a double mind, and that whatever they thus offered was polluted, because it did not proceed from a right motive.

We said yesterday, that the Prophet did not require fat or lean beasts, because God valued either the blood or flesh of animals on its own account, but for the end in view; for these were the performances of religion by which God designed to train up the Jews for the end contemplated, and in the duty of repentance. As then they were so sordid as to these sacrifices, it was easy to conclude, that they were gross and profane despisers of God, and had no concern for religion.

The reason follows, *For a great king am I, saith Jehovah, and my name is terrible*[1] *among the nations.* God declares

[1] Rendered "illustrious—ἐπιφανὴς," by the *Septuagint*,—"powerful," by the *Targum*,—"dreadful—horribile," by *Jerome*,—"terrible—terribile," by *Marckius*,—"shall be feared," by *Henderson*,—"shall be had in reverence," by *Newcome*, and the same with *Drusius*, "reverendum." The word is literally "to be feared," נורא; it is often rendered "terrible," what causes dread or terror. Some take the present tense, "my name is terrible," *i.e.*, is dreaded on account of my greatness, manifested by my judgments. But if we take the future, then we must render the words—"my name shall be feared" or reverenced.—*Ed.*

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here that his majesty was of no account among the Jews, as though he had said, "With whom do you think that you have to do?" And this is what we ought carefully to consider when engaged in God's service. We indeed know that it is a vice which has prevailed in all ages, that all nations and individuals thought that they worshipped God, when they devised foolish and frivolous rites according to their own fancies. If then we have a desire to worship God aright, we must remember how great he is; for his majesty will raise us up above the whole world, and cease will that audacity which possesses almost all mankind; for they think that their own will is a law, when they presumptuously obtrude anything on God. The greatness of God then ought to humble us, that we may not worship him according to the perceptions of our flesh, but offer him only what is worthy of his celestial glory.

He again repeats what we have before observed, though it was disregarded by the Jews,—that he was a *great king* through the whole world. As then the Jews thought that sacrifices could not be offered to God, such as he would accept, in any other place but at Jerusalem, and in the temple on Mount Sion, he testifies that he is a great king even in the farthest parts of the world. It hence follows, that God's worship would not be confined to Judea, or to any other particular part of the world; for by the gospel the Lord would receive to himself all nations, and come into the possession of his kingdom. Now follows—

CHAPTER II.

1. And now, O ye priests, this commandment *is* for you.

2. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart.

1. Et nunc ad vos præceptum hoc, O sacerdotes,—

2. Si non audieritis et non posueritis super cor, ut detis gloriam nomini meo, dicit Iehova exercituum, mittam (*copula hic abundat*) in vos maledictionem, et maledicam benedictionibus vestris, atque etiam maledixi eam (*est mutatio numeri, pro* eas,) quia non ponitis super cor.

Though the priests did not sin alone, yet it is not without

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reason, as we have said, that they were regarded as the first in wickedness; for it was their office to correct what the people did amiss. Their dissimulation had the effect of encouraging the common people to sin: hence the Prophet accuses them especially as the authors of impiety; and this is what the words intimate, if they are rightly considered.

To you, he says, *O priests*. They might have indeed exonerated themselves, or at least transferred a part of their guilt to others: "Oh! what can we do? for we see that the people are growing cold in God's worship; it is better that imperfect sacrifices should be offered than none at all." As then they might by evasion have somewhat extenuated their guilt, the Prophet the more sharply reproves them and says, *To you* especially *is addressed this command*, as they ought to have shown to others the right way; for when they dissembled, their connivance was nothing else but a consent; and thus they divested the people of God's fear, and allowed them to corrupt the whole of religion by offering spurious sacrifices. *To you* then, he says, that is, "Though the whole people is guilty before God, think not that ye are on this account excused; for it behoves you to check this wickedness, for God has set you over the people as their teachers and guides: as then ye have neglected your duty, whatever others have done amiss, falls justly on your heads. For how has it happened that the people have dared to proceed so far in impiety? even because you have no concern for religion; for God has promoted you to the priesthood for this end—to preserve in integrity the worship of his name; but ye know of all the prevailing profanations, and ye hold your peace: *To you* then *is this command.*"

He then adds, *If ye will not hear nor lay it to heart to give glory to my name*, &c. He seems here to threaten the priests alone; and yet if any one carefully considers the whole passage, he will easily perceive that this address extends to the whole people, in such a way however that it is in the first place directed to the priests; for as I have said the greater portion of the guilt belonged to them. God then denounces a heavy punishment on the whole people as well as on the priests, even that he would *send a curse*. But

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that they might not object and say that they were too severely dealt with, God shows how justly he was displeased with them, because they hearkened not nor attended to his warnings. What indeed is less tolerable than not to hear God speaking? But as many thought it enough to stretch the ear, and then immediately to forget what had been spoken, it is added, *If ye lay it not to heart*, that is, If ye attend not and seriously apply your hearts to what is said. We see then that the Prophet shows how that God had a just cause for severely punishing them; for it was an impiety not to be borne, when he could obtain no hearing from men. But the Prophet shows at the same time what it is to hear God; he therefore adds the latter clause as a definition or an explanation of the former: for God is not heard, if we receive with levity his words, so that they soon vanish away; but we hear them when we lay them on the heart, or, as the Latins say, when we apply the mind to them. There is then required a serious attention, otherwise it will be the same as though the ears were closed against God.

Let us further learn from this passage that obedience is of so much account with God, that he bears nothing less than a contempt of his word or a careless attention to it, as though we regarded not its authority. We must also notice that our guilt before God is increased and enhanced, when he recalls us to the right way, and seeks to promote our welfare by warning and exhorting us. When therefore God is thus kindly careful for our salvation, we are doubly inexcusable, if we perversely reject his teaching, warnings, counsels, and other remedies which he may apply.

He now adds, *I will send on you a curse;* and this curse he immediately explains, *I will curse your blessings.*[1] The word blessing, we know, means everywhere in Scripture the beneficence or kindness of God. God then is said to bless us when he bountifully supports us and supplies whatever is necessary for us. And hence seems to have arisen the expres-

[1] It is "your blessing" in one MS., in the *Sept.*, the *Targum*, and *Arabic;* and this reading is confirmed by "it" in the next line. By "blessing," says *Newcome*, "is meant the portion of the priests:" and as the priests are especially addressed, this is probable.—*Ed.*

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sion, that God by his nod alone can satisfy us with all abundance of good things. By blessings then he means a large and an abundant provision, and also rest from enemies, a healthy air, and everything of this kind. Some think that those prayers are intended, by which the priest blessed the people; but there is no reason for this. God then had manifested his favour to the Jews; he now declares that he will deprive them of all his benefits, that they might know that he is not propitious to them. Blessings then are evidences of God's bounty and paternal favour.

But he immediately adds, *Yea, I have cursed.* By which words he proves their senselessness: for they were not even taught by their evils, which yet produce some effect even on fools, who, according to the common proverb, begin to be wise when they are chastised. God then here reproves the stupidity of the Jews; for they had already been deprived of his benefits, and they might have known by experience that he was not propitious to them, but on the contrary an angry judge; and yet they were touched by no penitence, according to what we have seen in the other Prophets.

We now understand the import of the words, and at the same time the object of the Prophet: *I will* then *curse your blessings, and what is more,* (so I explain וְגַם, *ugam,*) *I have already cursed* them: but ye are like blocks of wood or stones; for the very scourges avail nothing with you. He again repeats, *because ye lay it not on your heart,* in order to show that he could not bear the contempt of his word, for it was, as we have said, a sign of extreme impiety. It follows—

3. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts; and *one* shall take you away with it.

3. Ecce ego corrumpo (*vel* perdo) vobis semen (*vertunt Græci,* brachium; *sed decepti sunt in una litera,*) et spergam stercus super facies vestras, stercus solemnitatum vestrarum; et tollet vos ad se (*alii vertunt,* tollet vos ad ipsum; *sed coacta est illa expositio.*)

He confirms here again what he had said in the last verse, —that they would perceive God's curse in want and poverty. The curse of God is any kind of calamity; for as God declares especially his favour by a liberal support, so the steril-

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ity of the land and defective produce most clearly evidence the curse of God. The Prophet then shows, by mentioning one thing, what sort of curse was nigh the Jews,—that God would *destroy* their *seed.* Some read, but improperly, "I will destroy you and the seed." I wonder how learned men make such puerile mistakes, when there is nothing ambiguous in the Prophet's words. *I will destroy* then *for you the seed;* that is, "Sow as much as you please, I will yet destroy your seed, so that it shall produce no fruit." In short, he threatens the Jews with want and famine; for the land would produce nothing when cursed by God.[1]

But as the Jews flattered themselves on account of their descent, and ever boasted of their fathers, and as that pre-eminence with which God had favoured them proved to them an occasion of haughtiness and pride, the Prophet here ridicules this foolish confidence, *I will scatter dung,* he says, *on your faces:* "Ye are a holy nation, ye are the chosen seed of Abraham, ye are a royal priesthood; these are your boastings; but the Lord will render your faces filthy with dung; this will be your nobility and pre-eminence! there is then no reason for you to think yourselves exempt from punishment, because God has adopted you; for as ye have abused his benefits and profaned his name, so ye shall also find in your turn, that he will cover you with everything disgraceful and ignominious, so as to make you wholly filthy: ye shall then be covered all over with dung, and shall not be the holy seed of Abraham."

But as they might have again raised a clamour and say, "Have we then in vain so diligently served God? why has he bidden a temple to be built for him by us and promised to dwell there? God then has deceived us, or at least his promises avail nothing,"—the Prophet gives this answer, "God will overwhelm you with disgrace and also your sacrifices." But he calls them the *dung of solemnities,* as though

[1] The word זרוע, means "the shoulder" as well as "seed," and it is so rendered by the *Sept.*, and the *Arabic*, and also by *Grotius* and *Newcome,*—

Behold, I will withhold from you the shoulder.

The shoulder belonged to the priests, see Lev. vii. 32; Deut. xviii. 3 This rendering suits the context better than the other.—*Ed.*

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he had said, "I will cover you with reproach on account of your impiety, which is seen in your sacrifices." Had the Jews any holiness they derived it from their sacrifices, by which they expiated their sins and reconciled themselves to God: but the Prophet says that it was their special ill-savour which offended God, and which he abominated, because they vitiated their sacrifices. Nor is that to be disapproved which some of the rabbins have said, that the Prophet alludes to the oxen, calves, and rams; for when the Jews from various places brought their sacrifices, there must have been much dung from all that vast number. There is then here a striking allusion to the victims themselves, as though he had said, "Ye think that I can be pacified by your sacrifices, as though loads of dung were pleasing to me; for when ye bring such a vast number, even the place itself, the area before the temple, throws an ill-savour on account of the dung that is there. Ye are then, forsooth! holy, and all your filth is cleansed away by means of this dung. Begone then together with the dung of your solemnities; for I will cast this very dung on your heads."

We now perceive what the Prophet means: and emphatical are the words, *Behold I;* for God by these single words cuts off all those pretences by which the Jews deceived themselves, and thought that their vices were concealed from God: "I myself," he says, "am present, to whom ye think your sacrifices to be acceptable; *I* then *will destroy your seed, and I will* also *cast dung on your faces;* all the dignity which ye pretend shall be abolished, for ye think that ye are defended by a sort of privilege, when ye boast yourselves to be the seed of Abraham: it is dung, it is dung," he says. He afterwards shows what was especially the dung and the filth: for when they objected and said, "What! have our sacrifices availed nothing?" he answers, "Nay, I will cast that dung upon you, because the chief pollution is in your sacrifices, for ye vitiate and adulterate my service: and what else is your sacrifice but profanation only? ye are sacrilegious in all your empty pomps. Since then all your victims have an ill-savour and displease me, and as I nauseate them, (as it is also said in the first and last chapter of Isaiah,) I will

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heap the dung on your own heads, because ye think it to be your chief expiation."

He adds at last, *It shall take you to itself;* that is, "Ye shall be dung altogether; and thus all your boastings, that ye are descended from the holy Patriarch Abraham, shall be wholly useless; though I made a covenant and promised that you should be to me a royal priesthood, yet the dung *shall take you to itself*, and thus whatever dignity I have hitherto conferred on you shall be taken away."[1] Let us proceed—

4. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

4. Et scietis quòd miserim ad vos hoc mandatum ut sit (*vel*, ut esset; *sed magis placet*, ut sit; *est*, ad essendum, *ad verbum; ergo* ad essendum pactum meum, *si posset* dici Latinè,) pactum meum cum Levi, dicit Iehova exercituum.

Here he addresses in particular the priests; for though the whole people with great haughtiness resisted God, yet the priests surpassed them. And we know how ready men are to turn to evil whatever benefits God may bestow on them. It has been then a common evil in men from the beginning of the world, to exalt themselves and to raise their crests against God, when they found themselves adorned with his benefits: but we know that the more any one is bound to God the more thankful he ought to be, for our gifts are not our own, but the benefits by which God binds us to himself. "What hast thou as thine own?" says Paul, "thou hast then no reason to glory." (1 Cor. iv. 7.) This evil however has ever prevailed among men—that they have defrauded God of his glory, and have turned to an occasion of pride the favours received from him. But it is an evil which is very commonly seen in all governors; for they who are raised to a high dignity, think no more that they are men, but take to themselves very great liberty when they find themselves so much exalted above others. Thus kings

[1] Participles and verbs are often connected by "and" in Hebrew, and so in Welsh; but then the auxiliary verb is understood. Such is the case here, and the *Septuagint* have so regarded it, "καὶ λήψομαι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὸ αὐτό—and I will take you to the same."—*Ed.*

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and those in authority seem to themselves to be above the common order of men, and presumptuously disregard all laws; they think that everything is lawful for them, as no one opposes their wilfulness. The same thing is also to be seen in teachers. For when God favoured the priests with the highest honour, they became blinded, as it will hereafter be seen, by that favour of God, that they thought themselves to be as it were semi-gods; and the same thing has taken place in the kingdom of Christ.

For how have arisen so great impieties under the Papacy, except that pastors have exercised tyranny and not just government? For they have not regarded the purpose for which they have been called into their office, but as the name of pastor is in itself honourable, they have dared to raise themselves above the clouds, and to assume to themselves the authority of God himself. Hence it has been, that they have dared to bind consciences by their own laws, to change the whole truth, and to corrupt the whole worship of God: and hence also followed the scandalous sale of justice. How have these things happened? Because priests were counted as angels come down from heaven; and this same danger is ever to be feared by us.

This then is the vice which the Prophet now refers to; and he shows that the priests had no reason to think that they could shake off the yoke, *Ye shall know*, he says, *that to you belongs this command.* We indeed see what they objected to Jeremiah, "The law shall not depart from the priests nor counsel and wisdom from the elders." (Jer. xviii. 18.) These are the weapons by which the Papists at this day defend themselves. When we allege against them plain proofs from Scripture, they find themselves clearly reproved and convicted by God's word; but here is their Ajax's shield, under which they hide all their wickedness, retailing as it were from the ungodly and wicked priests what is related by Jeremiah, "'The law shall not depart from the priests;' we are the Church, can it err? is not the Holy Spirit dwelling in the midst of us? 'I am with you always to the end of the world,' (Matt. xxviii. 20;) did Christ intend to deceive his Church when he said this to his Apostles? and we

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are their successors." The Prophet now gives the answer, *Ye shall know*, he says, *that to you belongs this command.*

And he adds, not without severity, *that my covenant may be with Levi*;[1] as though he had said, "On what account are ye thus elated? for God cannot get a hearing for himself, yet ye say that the covenant with Levi is not to be void, as though God had put Levi in his own place, and divested himself of all authority when he appointed that tribe, and made you ministers of the temple and teachers of the people; is he nothing? What was God's purpose when he honoured you with that dignity? He certainly did not mean to reduce himself to nothing, but, on the contrary, his will was, that his own right should remain entire and complete. When therefore I reprove your vices, and show that ye are become vile, and as it were dung, that ye are defiled by everything disgraceful,—when I make these things openly known, I do not violate the covenant made with Levi. God then justly summons you before his tribunal, and strips you of your honour, in order that the covenant he made with Levi may be confirmed and ratified." This is, as I have said, a severe derision.

But we may hence learn a useful truth. The Prophet briefly teaches us that the priestly office takes away nothing from God's authority, who requires a pure and holy worship, and that it lessens in nothing the authority of the law, for sound doctrine ought ever to prevail. So at this day, when we resist the Papal priests, we do not violate God's covenant, that is, it is no departure from the order of the Church, which ought ever to remain sacred and inviolable. We do not then, on account of men's vices, subvert the pastoral office, and the preaching of the word; but we assail the men themselves, so that due order may be restored, that sound doctrine may obtain a hearing among men, that the worship of God may be pure, which these unprincipled men

[1] That my covenant may remain with Levi.—*Newcome.* This seems to be the sense. He sent "this command," or this message, as מצוה may be rendered here, in order that by reforming his sons his covenant might remain in force, for disobedience on their part would abrogate it, as it was a conditional covenant.—*Ed.*

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have violated. We therefore boldly attempt to subvert the whole of the Papacy, with this full confidence, that we lessen nothing from the authority of teaching, nor in any way defraud the pastoral office; nay, order in the Church, the preaching of the truth, and the very dignity of pastors, cannot exist, except the Church be purged from its defilements, and its filth removed. Thus must we say also of those unprincipled men, who are too nearly connected with us, or too near us, and I wish they were wholly extinct in the world: but how many pests conceal themselves under this covering, or under this mask—"What! are we not the ministers of the word?" So say you who are without any principle; I wish ye were in your dung, or in your cells, where formerly ye too much corrupted the world; but now the devil has brought you forth into the Church of God, that ye may corrupt whatever had hitherto remained sound. As then there are many at this day who boast of this honour—that they are ministers of the word, and pastors, and that they teach the gospel, they ought to be checked by this answer of the Prophet—that when all their corruptions are fully and really cleansed away, then confirmed and ratified will be the compact which God would have to be valid with his Church and with the ministers of his word. He then adds an explanation—

5. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him *for* the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

5. Fœdus meum fuit cum eo vitæ et pacis; et dedi illi timorem; et timuit me, et à facie nominis mei contritus fuit.

The Prophet now proves more clearly how God violates not his covenant, when he freely rebukes the priests, and exposes also their false attempts in absurdly applying to themselves the covenant of God, like the Papal priests at this day, who say that they are the Church. How? because they have in a regular order succeeded the apostles; but this is a foolish and ridiculous definition; for he who occupies the place of another ought not on that account only to be deemed a successor. Were a thief to kill the master of a family, and to occupy his place, and to take possession of all

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his goods, is he to be accounted his legitimate successor? So these dishonest men, to show that they are to be regarded as apostles, only allege a continued course of succession; but the likeness between them ought rather to be the subject of inquiry. We must see first whether they have been called, and then whether they answer to their calling; neither of which can they prove. Then their definition is altogether frivolous.

So also our Prophet here shows, that the priests made pretences and deceived the common people, while they sought to prove themselves heirs of the covenant which God had made with Levi their father, that is, with the tribe itself. "I shall be faithful," says God, "and my faithfulness will be evident from the compact itself; *my compact* with your father *was that of life and peace*:[1] but it was mutual: ye seem not to think that there are two parties in a compact, and that there is, according to what is commonly said, a reciprocal obligation: but I on my part promised to your father to be his father, and I also stipulated with him that he was to obey me, to obey my word, and whatever I might afterwards require. Now ye will have me to be bound to you, and yourselves to be free from every obligation. What equity is this—that I should owe everything to you and you nothing to me? *My compact* then *with him was that of life and peace;* but what is your compact? what is it that ye owe to me? Even what the mutual compact which I made with your father Levi and his tribe requires; perform this, and ye shall find that I am faithful and constant in all my promises." I cannot go farther now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased to choose us at this day thy priests, and hast consecrated us to thyself by the

[1] That we may understand these terms we must have recourse to the case evidently alluded to, that of Phinehas, in Num. xxv. 12, 13. God promised to him the covenant of peace and of perpetual priesthood—of peace, that is, of reconcilement, because God through the zeal displayed by Phinehas became reconciled to the children of Israel—and of perpetuity as to the priesthood, signified here by life or "lives," as the word is plural. —*Ed.*

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blood of thine only-begotten Son and through the grace of thy Spirit,—O grant, that we may rightly and sincerely perform our duties to thee, and be so devoted to thee that thy name may be really glorified in us; and may we be thus more and more confirmed in the hope of those promises by which thou not only guidest us through the course of this earthly life, but also invitest us to thy celestial inheritance; and may Christ thy Son so rule in us, that we may ever cleave to our head, and be gathered as his members into a participation of that eternal glory into which he has gone before us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-fourth.

We began in the last lecture to explain what the Prophet says here of the priesthood, and we have said that the sum of the whole is—that wicked priests in vain lay claim to the title of honour, who do not faithfully perform their office; for the compact between God and them is mutual, inasmuch as God did not institute priests under the law in order to allow them unbridled liberty, or to deprive himself of every power; but, on the contrary, he set them over the Church in order to retain the people in true religion. As then the obligation is, as they say, reciprocal, there is no reason for the priests to arrogate supreme power and to deprive God of it. The Prophet then had said, that God's compact with Levi was that of life and peace, because God, who is faithful in his promises, had promised to be propitious to the Levites. Our Prophet therefore calls it the compact of life and peace, because the Levites had found that God was in every respect kind and bountiful, whenever they performed their parts.

He now adds, *I gave to him fear, and he feared me.* The interpreters who consider the preposition *for*, or, on account of (*propter*), to be understood, pervert the whole sense; for fear here is to be taken for the rule of worshipping God, as though he had said, "I have prescribed how he is rightly to perform his office." He means then that God gave to the Levites a knowledge of the way in which he was to be served, because he would not have them to wander according to their own notions, but he prescribed to them the duties of

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their office, as though he had said, "Ye are indeed endued with no common honour, for ye are the teachers of the Church; but yet I have laid a restraint upon you, as I have commanded the people to obey you, so have I commanded you what to do. Since then I have given my fear to Levi, since I have prescribed how he is to worship me, is it not now most shameless and most impious, to boast of the honourable name of priesthood, and at the same time to be no priests? for what is it to be God's priest, except to govern the Church as God has commanded? *I have* then *given him my fear.*"[1]

And he feared me; that is, he observed the law laid down for him; *and he was contrite before my name;* that is, "he conducted himself in a humble manner, he did not exalt himself by vain pride, that he might oppress my Church, rule tyrannically, and subvert all due order; but he was an

[1] *Calvin's* copy must have had the verb to "give" without the affix ם, as it is in two MSS., and according to the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, and the *Arabic*. But even in this case the meaning given can hardly be defended; for מוראֹ, which occurs elsewhere about eleven times, has not the sense here assigned to it. It means fear in the sense of dread or terror, the fear which arises from the apprehension of displeasure or wrath, the fear which a servant has for his master, as in ch. i. 6, where this very word occurs. The idea expressed by *Calvin* is the same with that of the *Targum*, and adopted also by *Grotius;* and the meaning given is, "the doctrine of the law." But that it means fear here, the fear of majesty and the fear of wrath, is evident from the whole context. The subject at the end of the last chapter is the fear inspired by God's greatness, and the conclusion of this verse is sufficiently express.

The ם after the verb "gave" is no doubt the right reading, as it exists in all MSS. except two. Then comes the difficulty of construction. There is one MS. which has ב before "fear," and the *Septuagint* have ὑπέρ, *for*, or, *on account of*, before it. This removes the difficulty, and the meaning will be found consistent with the facts of the case alluded to, and with the general tenor of this passage. The verse then would run thus—

5. My covenant with him was that of life and peace,
And I gave them to him on account of *his* fear;
For he feared me,
And at the presence of my name he was terrified.

The last verse is the Niphal of חתת, which means to break, and to be broken, and hence to be broken in mind by fear and dread, to be dismayed or terrified. "Dismayed" is the rendering of *Newcome*, and "stood in awe" is that of *Henderson*. It is rendered "discouraged" in Deut. i. 21, but it ought to be "terrified" or "dismayed," as in Jer. i. 17; Ezek. ii. 6; iii. 9.

"At the presence of my name," seems to mean the same thing as "at my presence."—*Ed.*

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example of humility, for he owned himself the more bound to me, because I honoured him with so much dignity as to make him the ruler of my Church." It afterwards follows—

6. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

6. Lex veritatis fuit in ore ejus, et iniquites non fuit reperta, in labiis ejus; in pace et rectitudine ambulavit mecum; et multos redire fecit (*hoc est*, convertit) ab iniquitate.

He explains more fully how Levi responded to God's command,—that he had *the law of truth in his mouth.* The chief duty of a priest is to show the right way of living to the people; for however upright and holy one may be through his whole life, he is not on that account to be deemed a priest. Hence our Prophet dwells especially on this point—that Levi taught the people. He does not speak of Levi himself; for we know that Levi was dead when Aaron was made a priest. For God does not here speak of individuals, but of the tribe; as though he had said, "Aaron and Eleazar, and those who followed them, knew for what end they were honoured with the priesthood, and they faithfully performed their duties." The Prophet now explains what God mainly requires from priests—to show to the people, as I have already said, the way of living a pious and holy life; but he adopts different words, which yet mean the same thing.

The law of truth, he says, *was in his mouth.* Why does he not commend the integrity of his heart rather than his words? Had he spoken of an individual, the Prophet might have justly said, that he who sought to be an approved servant of God, had conducted himself harmless towards men; but he speaks of a public office, when he says, that the law of truth was in his mouth; for he is not worthy of that honour who is mute: and nothing is more preposterous, or even more ridiculous, than that those should be counted priests who are no teachers. These two things are, as they say, inseparable—the office of the priesthood and teaching.

And that he might more clearly show that he speaks not of an ordinary matter, he repeats the same thing in other words, *Iniquity was not found in his lips.* We hence see

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that all this belongs peculiarly to the sacerdotal office. He afterwards adds, *In peace and rectitude he walked before me.* The Prophet here commends also the sincere concern for religion which the first priests manifested, for they walked with God in peace and uprightness; they not only carried signals in their lips and mouth, by which they might have been justly deemed the ministers of God and the pastors of his Church; but they also executed faithfully their office. And he alludes to the peace of which he had spoken: as God then had promised peace to the Levites, so also he says, that the Levites had lived themselves peaceably before God; for they did not break the covenant which he had made with them. As then they had responded to the stipulation of God, he says that they had walked in peace: but he also mentions how this was; it was, because they had walked in uprightness.

And the phrase, אִתִּי, *ati*, with me, ought to be observed; for it confirms what I have stated,—that the honour of the priesthood in no way lessens God's authority, for he keeps the priests devoted to himself. He intimates then that they were not elevated to such a height, that their dignity took away anything from God's authority: for the obligation, which has been mentioned, ought to be mutual: God is faithful; the priests also must be faithful in their office, and show themselves to be the legitimate ministers of God.[1]

He also mentions the fruit of their doctrine; for Levi *turned many from iniquity*, that is, he led many to repentance. It afterwards follows (for this verse ought to be joined)—

[1] "The fear of God," says *Cocceius*, "which was in the first priests, is more fully declared by its effects, which are twofold—sayings and doings. The doctrine of truth was in their mouth; they taught the truth, they were not silent, but sincerely taught it, without admiring what was false; for what is false is injustice, and it is the truth set forth either in a perverted form, or by addition, or by diminution. As to doings, they walked in peace, they did not rebel against God, nor did they seek devious and crooked ways, but walked in a strait course."

The word עולה is rendered "unrighteousness, or, injustice—ἀδικία," by the *Septuagint* and the *Targum*,—"falsitas, falseness," by *Drusius*,—and "iniquity" by many. There being no agreement in gender between it and the verb "formed," *Marckius* suggests that דבר is understood, "the word of iniquity," &c.—*Ed.*

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7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he *is* the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

7. Certè labia sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et Legem requirent ex ore ejus, quia nuntius Iehovæ exercituum est.

What the Prophet has said of the first priests he extends now to the whole Levitical tribe, and shows that it was a perpetual and unchangeable law as to the priesthood. He had said that Levi had been set over the Church, not to apply to himself the honour due to God, but to stand in his own place as the minister of God, and the teacher of the chosen people. The same thing he now confirms, declaring it as a general truth that *the lips of the priest ought to retain knowledge*, as though he had said, that they were to be the store-house from which the food of the Church was to be drawn. God then did appoint the priests over his chosen people, that the people might seek their food from them as from a store-room, according to what we find to be the case with a master of a family, who has his store of wine and his store of provisions. As then the food of a whole family is usually drawn out from places where provisions are laid up, so the Prophet makes use of this similitude,—that God has deposited knowledge with the priests, so that the mouth of every priest might be a kind of store-house, so to speak, from which the people are to seek knowledge and the rule of a religious life: *Keep knowledge* then *shall the lips of the priest, and the law shall they seek from his mouth.*[1]

He shows how it is to be kept; the priests are not to withhold it, but the whole Church is to enjoy the knowledge of which they are the keepers. They shall then seek or demand the law from his mouth.

Law may be taken simply for truth; but the Prophet no

[1] The verbs, as here rendered, are future: but being preceded by כִּי, many consider them as declaring what *ought* to be: and they are thus rendered by *Drusius*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*, "should keep," or "ought to keep," &c. We find the future thus used when preceded by הֲ, "whether," in Ezek. xxxiv. 2; and when preceded by no particle, as in chap. i. 6, where the version ought clearly to be,—

A son should honour a father,
And a servant, his Lord.

This use of the future, as designating a duty or obligation, is much more frequent in Hebrew than what is commonly supposed.—*Ed.*

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doubt alludes here to the doctrine of Moses, the only true fountain of all knowledge. We indeed know that God included in his law whatever was necessary for the welfare of his Church; nor was there anything added by the Prophets. Our Prophet then so includes every truth in the word תורה, *ture*, law, that he might at the same time show that it was laid up in what Moses has taught.

He says in the last place, that the priest is the *messenger of Jehovah*. He briefly defines here what the priesthood is, even an embassy which God commits to men, that they may be his interpreters in teaching and ruling the Church. What then is a priest? A messenger of God, and his interpreter. It hence follows that the office of teaching cannot be separated from the priesthood; for it is a monstrous thing when any one boasts himself to be a priest, when he is no teacher. The Prophet then draws an argument from the definition itself, when he says that a priest is a *messenger* of God. Then follows the contrast when he says—

8. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

8. Atqui vos declinastis è via, impingere (*vel*, ruere) fecistis multos in lege; corrupistis fœdus Levi, dicit Iehova exercituum.

He shows here how far were the priests of his time from fulfilling that compact which he had mentioned. He hence concludes that they were unworthy of the honour of which they were so confidently proud, and under the shadow of which they sought to cover their vices, as though they were not bound to God, and were at liberty to tread the Church under foot with impunity. He then shows that it was an extremely foolish arrogance in them to seek to be exempt from all law, and yet to regard God and the whole Church bound to them.

He says first, that they *deviated from the way*, that is, they exhibited nothing suitable to their office, on account of which they were counted priests. He then amplifies their guilt—that they *made many to stumble in the law*.[1] He had before

[1] "At the law" is our version, and that of *Newcome*, who adds, "by offering blemished sacrifices." *Henderson* has "in the law." They de-

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said that Levi walked in peace and uprightness; what he now says is very different—that the priests, forgetting religion, had first shaken off the yoke. He had said that Levi restored many from iniquity; but he now says that the priests made many to stumble.

He adds in the last place—*Ye have therefore corrupted the covenant.* An illative is to be put here, for so ought the sentence to be explained—"As ye have deviated from the way, and perverted the whole worship of God, ye have thus violated the compact which had been sanctioned with Levi; ye have then no reason to boast of your title of honour, for succession failed when ye fell away from the faithfulness of your father Levi." At length it follows—

9. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

9. Atqui etiam ego dedi vos probrosos et abjectos toti populo, secundum quod non servastis vias meas, et extulistis personas in lege.

The Prophet draws this conclusion—that the priests in vain gloried in the honour of their office, for they had ceased to be the priests of God. We may now return to the main point.

We perceive what the subject is which the Prophet handles here: as the priests sought by a peculiar privilege to exempt themselves from all reproof, he assails them in particular; for teaching would have been useless as to the common people, except the priests themselves were brought to order. The priests no doubt flattered the people, and thus attempted to deprive the Prophets of every respect, in order that their doctrine might produce no effect. This is the reason why our Prophet so sharply reproves them. But we must consider the state of the case. The priests said that they had been set, by divine authority, over the whole Church, and

parted from the *way* prescribed in the law, and caused others to fall or stumble in it, that is, in the way which the law pointed out. The way, says *Drusius*, is the law itself. To stumble in the law is to transgress it.

For "causing to stumble," the *Septuagint* have "ye have weakened—ἀσθενήσατε;" *Sym.* and *Theod.*, "ye have caused to stumble—ἐσκανδαλίσατε;" and so the *Vulgate*. *Dathius* gives this paraphrase—"ye have caused many to sin against the law."—*Ed.*

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that they could not be deprived of that honour which they had received from God. They however took only but one part of the covenant, and yet sought to deprive God of his right. The Prophet here answers them—that God had indeed favoured them with no common honour in appointing them the priests of his Church, but that the compact, which included a mutual stipulation, was at the same time to be considered; for God had not simply appointed them the guides of his Church, but had also added a condition.

We hence see that the hinge of the matter was, that the priests presumptuously and absurdly laid hold on what favoured only their own cause, and at the same time passed by and cunningly overlooked the chief thing—that the priesthood was connected with the worship of God. Now had they attained what they wished, there would have been no God in the Church, but they would have exercised over it a tyrannical power. But it has ever been, and is still the will of God, to retain the supreme power over mortals in his own hand.

Having now seen the design of the Prophet, we may easily perceive the import of the whole subject. But before we proceed farther, we must first observe, that we have here described to us the character of true and legitimate priests; for the Prophet not only speaks of the office of priests, but sets before us a living image in which we cannot be deceived: and hence all who are engaged in the pastoral office may know what God requires from them. I will only just mention what he first says—that God gave fear to priests; for I have already given a sufficient explanation of this by saying, that priests are not to abuse their right, as though the highest power were granted to them; for God will not have his Church subject to tyranny, but his will is to reign alone in it through the ministry of men. The main thing then to be borne in mind is this—that a rule is prescribed to priests, that though they preside and possess the first rank of honour among the people, it is yet under certain conditions.

We shall now consider only this which the Prophet says—that Levi faithfully and sincerely performed his office, be-

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cause *the law of truth was in his mouth*, and *no iniquity was found in his lips;* to which we ought yet to add the general truth which immediately follows—that *the priest's lips ought to keep knowledge.* It is then a law which cannot be abolished, that those who are priests or pastors in the Church are to be teachers. And not unwisely does Gregory apply a custom under the law to this subject; for we know that appended to the priest's dress were bells; and it is distinctly commanded by Moses, that the priest should not go forth without this sound, (Exod. xxviii. 35.) Gregory, as I have said, accommodated this to teaching—"Woe," he says, "to us, if we go forth without sound, that is, if we boast that we are pastors, and in the meantime are dumb dogs; for nothing is less tolerable than that he who speaks not in the Church and whose voice is not clearly heard to the edification of the people, should be deemed a pastor." This is what a Roman Pope has said. Let those who now proudly and confidently boast themselves to be his successors, at least give the sound, and let us hear what they teach: but as their whole power is exercised in cruelty, it is evident how faithfully they keep God's covenant! But I now return to the words of the Prophet.

He says, that this law has been fixed by God, and that it cannot be nullified by any decrees or customs of men,—that the priest is to *keep knowledge* in his lips. He farther explains himself by showing that the priest is to be the keeper of knowledge, not that he may reserve it for himself, but that he may teach the whole people: *they shall seek*, he says, *the law from his mouth;* and afterwards he confines knowledge to true doctrine, as it was to flow from the law of God, the only true fountain of truth; for he had said, that the law of truth was in the mouth of Levi. It would not then be enough for one to have his mouth open and to be prepared to teach others, except purity of doctrine be retained. We hence see, that not only teaching is required from priests, but pure teaching, derived from the very mouth of God, according to what is said in Ezek. iii. 17, "Thou shalt receive from my mouth the word, and shalt declare it to them from me." God shows there that the Prophets had

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no such authority as that they could bring forth anything they pleased, or what they thought would be right, but that they were so far faithful teachers as they were his disciples alone: hence he bids him to seek the word from his mouth; and then he adds, "Thou shalt declare it to them from my mouth." So also it is said in Jer. xxiii. 28, "What is the chaff to the wheat? The Prophet who has a dream, let him declare his dream; but he who has my word, let him declare my word faithfully." Here God limits and defines the prophetic right, as though he had said, that the Prophets were not appointed, that they might bring anything indiscriminately, but that each, according to the measure of what was revealed to him, might faithfully dispense, or deliver, as it were from hand to hand, what he had received from heaven: for by mentioning two things, it was God's design to show that no doctrine is to be allowed, except what he himself has revealed; and he compares to chaff whatever men devise themselves, while the pure doctrine of the law is to be regarded as the wheat. This is then the second thing to be noticed in what the Prophet says in this passage: but we must also consider the last thing—that the priest is the *messenger* of the God of hosts.

This seems to have been said in honour of the priesthood; but the Prophet means that priests have nothing of their own or separate from God, and that whatever reverence is due to them ought to be referred to God himself, whose ministers they are. I have said that he reasons from the definition itself, as though he had said, that every one who would be a priest must also be a teacher. But we must also observe, that there is an implied comparison between God and priests, as though he had said, "Priests can claim nothing for themselves, but as interpreters of God." Hence, the plain conclusion is, that the priesthood takes away nothing from God's authority.

We now see that the Prophet includes in these few words two things of great importance—that there is no priesthood without doctrine or teaching, and no priest except he who faithfully performs his office as a teacher: and secondly, that God resigns not his own right and power when priests are

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set over the Church; for God commits to them the ministration only, and on this condition, that the authority remains in himself alone; for otherwise the priest would not be the messenger of the God of hosts. Among other things the Prophet requires also this of the priests—that they sincerely perform their duties. We indeed know that many apparently discharge their office, and excel in teaching, and carefully apply to their duties; but ambition stimulates some and avarice others. Hence the Prophet lays down another condition—that they are to walk in uprightness before God; that is, that they are not only to satisfy men, or to catch at the applause of the world, but to discharge their office with a pure conscience.

Thus have I shown that there is here set before our eyes a pattern by which we may know what God requires from us when he makes us pastors over his Church.

Now follows a reprobation of their conduct, for the Prophet says, *Ye have departed from the way.* Since he so boldly chastises the priests, we hence learn that they were subject to reproof; and nothing is more unreasonable than that the Papal clergy should seek to be exempt from every law and discipline, for the priests are here called to order, that they might know their own faults: *Ye have departed,* he says, *from the way,* and then, *ye have made many to err in the law.* This second thing being added, the priests ought by no means to be spared. When they sin only privately, though they may by bad examples corrupt the Church, yet this may somehow be borne with; but when they corrupt and deprave sound doctrine, when they subvert the order laid down in the law, they deserve no indulgence. This is the reason why Malachi so severely and so boldly reproves them.

He at last adds, *Ye have therefore violated the covenant.* This third clause may indeed be explained in two ways,—that the Prophet proceeds with his reproof, or that he draws a conclusion from the preceding clauses,—that they were deservedly stripped of all honour, because they stood not to the covenant. Now this latter exposition is the most suitable, according to what I have already stated. He then, as

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I have said, draws this conclusion, that their boasting was foolish, that they in vain said that they were a holy tribe whom God had chosen to be a peculiar possession to himself, for he says that the covenant of Levi had been violated by them; and this clause is set in opposition to the former, in which he says, ye shall know that my covenant was with Levi. We said then that the unfaithful ever contrive some disguise when they are reproved, as though they would deprive God of his right: so the Levitical priests said, that what God had once established could not be made void. Under this pretext, that they were of the holy tribe, they sought to be deemed holy; the Prophet then said to them, ye shall know that God's covenant is holy, and that ye are not holy. So also in this place, *Ye have violated*[1] *the covenant of Levi*, that is, "ye in vain pretend that you have been chosen by God, and that the honour of your priesthood has been confirmed to you; for God intended that his law, laid down by himself, should be kept. As then ye have violated the covenant of Levi, ye are no more Levites; as ye are become degenerated children, your inheritance is rightly taken away from you, and ye are deprived of the honour of the priesthood.

And corresponding with this view is what follows, *And I have already rendered* (or, will render) *you despicable and base to the whole people,*[2] *as ye have not kept my ways and had respect of persons in the law.*[3] God first shows that he

[1] The verb means to corrupt, and also to destroy or to make void. The *Septuagint* give the first meaning, "ye have corrupted—διεφθείρατε," and *Jerome* the second, "ye have made void—irritum fecistis." *Marckius* and *Henderson* have the first word, and *Newcome* the second, which is more suitable when applied to a covenant, though not when applied to "ways." To "make void," is also the most appropriate when it refers to wisdom, as in Ezek. xxxii. 7.—*Ed.*

[2] Striking and remarkable are the words of *Adam Clarke* on this verse, "See what happened to the truly abominable priesthood of France and Rome, 1796-8. They were the sole cause of that infidelity that brought about the Revolution. They are partially restored, and are endeavouring to supply by grimace, paltry superstition, and jesuitical cunning, what they want in purity of morals, soundness of doctrine, and unction from God. *They must mend, or look for another revolution.*"

[3] "Having one decision for the poor and another for the rich. See Lev. xxix. 15."—*Newcome;* or, as *Jerome* says, "Despising the just when poor, and honouring the unjust when rich."—*Ed.*

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was now bound by no law, so that he would not cast away these unfaithful priests who had broken his covenant. He also adds, that they had *respect to persons in the law*, for they coveted gain, and therefore turned to gratify men, and corrupted the whole truth of religion; and this is indeed a necessary consequence, when ambition or avarice bears rule, there can then be no sincerity, and the teaching of true religion will be adulterated. I cannot now finish. We shall consider to-morrow the difference between the ancient priesthood and that of the Christian Church.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast deigned to take us as a priesthood to thyself, and hast chosen us when we were not only of the lowest condition, but even profane and alien to all holiness, and hast consecrated us to thyself by thy Holy Spirit, that we may offer ourselves as holy victims to thee,—O grant, that we may bear in mind our office and our calling, and sincerely devote ourselves to thy service, and so present to thee our efforts and our labours, that thy name may be truly glorified in us, and that it may really appear that we have been ingrafted into the body of thy only-begotten Son; and as he is the chief and the only true and perpetual priest, may we become partakers of that priesthood with which thou hast been pleased to honour him, so that he may take us as associates to himself; and may thus thy name be perpetually glorified by the whole body as well as by the head.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-fifth.

We said yesterday, that the priests of the ancient Church were made its guides on the condition that they faithfully discharged their office, and further, that when wicked priests who acted perfidiously in their office boasted of their dignity, this false pretence was to be deemed as nothing, the title being claimed without the reality. These two things we have explained.

We must now see whether this applies to the state and discipline of the Christian Church. The Papists deny this, for they wish to rule freely and with unbridled license, and

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to perform nothing to God, as though their very dignity nullified his authority; but they cannot shake off the yoke, except they deprive God of all his right. Nor is it a wonder that they act in this way; for even under the law the Prophet had a hard contest with ungodly priests, who had fallen away from the duties of their office, their calling being ever in their mouths, though they very far departed from the law which God had prescribed to them. There is therefore nothing new in the case of the Papists, who seek to be free from every law, that they may do whatever they please and despise all reproofs; for they indeed possess power, and that tyrannical and barbarous. But what they say we ought to disregard, for God declares from above what we here read in the Prophet's words,—that he so rules the Church, that he is supreme above all mortals. It was not God's will, most surely, after Christ's coming in the flesh, to abandon the care and government of his Church, nor was it his will to be forced to submit as a private individual. If then the authority of God remains at this day safe and secure, it follows that nothing is changed in this respect as to his right over the priesthood. Whatever authority they pretend, who would be deemed pastors of the Church, they must necessarily so continue in their station as faithfully to perform the office which has been committed to them from above; for as God has raised them to that great honour, so he has also stipulated with them, that they should faithfully rule the Church.

But if the Papal clergy compare themselves with the Levitical priests, they will find that the latter had the advantage; for God, as it is well known, instituted an hereditary priesthood under the law. His purpose was, that after the coming of Christ pastors should be made by the suffrages of the Church; but the Levitical tribe claimed this honour as their own right under the law; for God had deposited the right and honour of the priesthood in that tribe. If then the Papists contend that more is due to them than to the Levitical priests, their claim is absurd; for there is no hereditary right, so that sons succeed their fathers in the ministry or pastoral office. We hence see that if a comparison be in

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this respect made, the priesthood under the law was as to succession far more important. And we know also what God had promised to Aaron and to his successors. From Aaron the dignity passed to the posterity of Phinehas, and he seems to have been favoured, and also his descendants, with an unalienable right. But God here expostulates with the priests, because they had violated the compact; and hence he says that he was no longer bound to them, because they had become covenant-breakers and apostates. Let now the Pope, with all his party, pretend what they please, most certain it is, that all they can allege vanish into nothing compared with the lofty claims which the Levitical priests might have apparently made.

The Pope says that the apostolic seat was fixed at Rome, because it was said to Peter, "Thou art Peter," &c. (Matt. xvi. 18.) I will not stop here to refute trifles of this kind; for there is no need of many words in discussing this point —whether this ought to be confined to the person of Peter, or whether it is to be extended to others; as it is not there stated. He says that Peter was a Roman bishop. Though this be conceded, (which yet can be easily disproved by history,) it does not follow that the primacy by a sort of hereditary right was transferred to all Roman bishops. Hence the succession, of which they proudly boast, is a mere fume. But were we to grant all they require, we must make this exception,—that the priesthood was not fixed to the place, so that every one called the bishop of the Roman Church should at the same time obtain the primacy, and be reputed head of the whole Church.

We must also in the second place see what sort of thing is the Papal priesthood; for though that beast appoints his own priests, it follows not that it is the ordination of Christ: nor is it anything like it. For what is a priest under the Papacy? even one who sacrifices Christ, that is, who robs Christ of that honour which the heavenly Father has confirmed to him by a solemn oath. Christ was called a priest; and this honour, as I have just said, was confirmed to him by an oath. All the Papal priests are inaugurated into their office, that they may sacrifice: "We give to thee power to

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offer appeasing sacrifices;" for thus they inaugurate them: and such words are suitable to the Papists; for those magical superstitions, which the Romans formerly used, continue still under the Papacy. We hence see, that when we examine the Papal priesthood according to the rule of Christ, it is altogether profane, nay, wholly sacrilegious.

But were their calling lawful, were we to grant that they are pastors of the Church, by a continued succession from the apostles, we must yet deny that they are to be allowed to claim all kinds of liberty and to tyrannize over the Church without being reproved; for whence do they derive such a privilege?

We therefore in short draw this conclusion—that what we read here of the Levitical priests not only applies to the Papal priests, but also bears with much more force against them; for they have no hereditary honour, their calling is not true nor legitimate, and they cannot be counted the pastors of the Church; on the other hand, they deprive Christ of his honour, yea, they daily sacrifice and slay him. We hence conclude, that they ought by no means to be suffered in the Church, for the covenant of God ought to remain inviolable; and what is it? that they keep the law of God in their mouth, and be his messengers and interpreters. When we see that these are dumb idols, yea, when we see that they turn the whole truth of God into falsehood, how can this barbarity be suffered? God is excluded, and the devil himself in the persons of men adulterates the whole worship of God, perverts, demolishes, and even reduces to nothing the whole of religion! and he also fills with lies the Church, which ought to be the sanctuary of truth!

These things might have been more fully handled; but it is enough briefly to show how foolishly the Papal clergy boast that they possess the honour of the priesthood, when yet it is evident that there is no right, no authority, when faith is not kept with God and with his Church. Let us now proceed—

10. Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we

10. Annon Pater unus omnibus nobis? annon Deus unus creavit nos? cur fraudabimus quisque fratrem suum: (*alii*, cur

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deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

transgredietur quisque in fratrem suum; *alii passivè accipiunt*, cur decipitur quisque à fratre suo) ad polluendum fœdus patrum nostrorum.

The Prophet accuses the Jews here of another crime—that they were perfidious towards God and their own brethren, and departed from that pre-eminence into which God had raised them, when they were chosen in preference to other nations to be a holy and peculiar people. This ingratitude the Prophet now condemns by saying, that they *all had one father, and that they had been all created by one God.*

The word *Father* may be applied to God as well as to Abraham, and some interpreters will have it repeated, which is no uncommon thing in Hebrew: they say then that all had God as their Father, because he created them all; so that the latter clause is taken as an explanation. But it is better, as I think, to apply the word to Abraham, and the passage requires this; for it follows at the end of the verse, that the covenant which the Lord had made with their fathers had been violated; and this will appear still more certain, when we bear in mind the design of the Prophet.[1] Presently a reproof follows, because they had taken many wives; but the Prophet seems not as yet to mention this vice, but speaks generally, that they did not preserve that purity to which they had been called, for they indiscriminately married heathen wives. As then they mingled without distinction with unbelievers and the despisers of God, the Prophet complains that they were unmindful of that dignity to which they had been elevated, when God deigned

[1] This is the view taken by most—*Jerome*, *Theodoret*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, *Marckius*, and *Henry*. *Henderson* has been led astray by a supposed parallelism between this and the next sentence; and he regards God to be meant. *Scott* has taken it in both views, but this is not to explain the passage. Indeed the very argument here used renders it necessary that Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, should be intended. Taking God to be meant by "father," some have been led to think that it is the language of the Jews who married strange wives, in their own defence, "Have we not all, Gentiles as well as Jews, one Father? and has not the same God created us?" This might do well until we come to the conclusion of the verse, where the violation of the *covenant* of the fathers is mentioned.—*Ed.*

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to adopt them as his holy people. For thus it happened, that the pre-eminence which Moses celebrates in Deut. iv. 8, disappeared, "What nation is so renowned, to whom God draws nigh, as thou seest that he is nigh to thee?" When therefore the Jews rendered themselves vile, the Prophet condemns them for ingratitude. He, at the same time, shows that they were become inhuman towards their brethren, with whom they had been united by a most sacred bond. It then seems probable to me, that God and Abraham are mentioned here, because God had chosen the race of Abraham and adopted them as his people, and also, because he had deposited his covenant with Abraham and the fathers: thus Abraham became, as it were, the mediator of the covenant which God made with his whole race. By thus understanding the subject of the Prophet, it is easier for us to see why he mentions Abraham as well as God.

Is there not one father, he says, *to us all?* that is, "Did not God select us from the rest of the world, when he promised to our father Abraham to be a God to him and to his seed? Since then God's favour has flowed to us from that fountain, what sottishness it is to break that sacred bond by which God has joined us to himself in the person of Abraham?" For when the Jews did not consider that they derived their origin from the holy patriarch, the consequence was, that the covenant of God with them became void and of no effect. This then is the reason why he says, that one God was to them all a Father. And as other nations might have claimed the same privilege, he adds, *Has not one God created us?* He shows that the Jews had descended in no common or ordinary way from their holy father Abraham, but that God was the maker of his race, that he created them. Did not he also create the rest of the world? Not in the same manner; for this creation ought to be confined especially to the Church. God has created the whole human race; but he created also the race of Abraham: and hence the Church is often called in Isaiah the work and the formation of God, (Is. lxvi. 21,) and Paul also adopts the same mode of speaking, (Eph. ii. 10.) Our Prophet then does not mean that the Jews had been created by God when born

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into this world, but that they had become his holy and peculiar people. As then God had thus created the Jews, and had given to them one father, that being mindful of their origin they might remain united in true religion, the Prophet here reprobates their sottishness in casting away from themselves this invaluable favour of God.

Every one dealt falsely with his brother; and thus they violated the covenant of the fathers. As to the verb בגד, *nubegad*, it has been variously explained by grammarians; but as to what is meant it is agreed, that the Jews are here condemned, because they were not only perfidious to God, but also fraudulent as to their neighbours: and thus they doubled their perfidy, the proof which was manifest, because they did not act with sincerity towards their brethren.[1] *Why* then, he says, *do we deal falsely with man*, that is, every one *with his own brother, so that we pollute the covenant of our fathers?* Here the covenant of the fathers is to be taken for that separation or laying apart which we have mentioned, by which God had adopted Abraham and his posterity, that they might be separated from all the nations of the world. Hence under this covenant of the fathers is God himself included; and as this has not been perceived, it is no wonder that this passage has been so frigidly explained, and that Malachi has been as it were wholly buried in darkness; though interpreters have tried to bring light,

[1] The word בגד, as a noun, which is its root, means a robe, a cloak, or a covering; when used as a verb, it signifies to cover or cloak things over, and so to act falsely, hypocritically, or treacherously. *Drusius'* definition is, to act perfidiously, to prevaricate, to deceive. It is rendered here improperly by the *Septuagint* "ἐγκατελίπετε—ye have forsaken." It is here in the future tense, and may be rendered as though it were in the subjunctive mood,—

Why should we act perfidiously, each one with his brother,
By violating the covenant of our fathers?

"Violating" is חלל, which means to perforate, to pierce, and to break in, so as to violate a holy place, and hence to profane; and so it is rendered by the *Septuagint*—τοῦ βεβηλῶσαι. To profane one's word in Num. xxx. 2, is to break it; and to profane a covenant in Ps. lv. 20, is to break it; and so it is rendered in both these places in our version. To *break* a covenant is a metaphor not very unlike that of *piercing* or *perforating* it. *Newcome* says that it refers to the ancient mode of cancelling bonds, which was done by striking a nail through them. See Col. ii. 14. "Hence the word," he adds, "signifies to *make void*."—*Ed.*

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yet the effect has been to pervert the real meaning of the Prophet. But it appears now plain, I think, that the Jews are here said to be guilty of a twofold perfidy—because they rejected the honour offered to them by God's gratuitous election, and also because they acted fraudulently towards their own brethren. It hence followed that the covenant of the fathers, that is, what God had deposited with the patriarchs, that it might come from hand to hand to their posterity, had been violated and made void by their wickedness.

We must yet notice what I have already referred to—that the priests are so reproved that the whole people are also included; and this we shall again presently see, and I add also, that the Prophet connects God with Abraham, in order to show that we shall fail to seek God effectually, if we seek him apart from his covenant, and also that our minds ought not to be fixed on men. There are indeed two vices against which we ought carefully to guard. Some, passing by all means, seek to fly upward to God; and so they entertain many vain thoughts and devise for themselves many labyrinths, from which they never emerge. We see how many fanatics there are at this day, who proudly speak against God's word, and yet touch neither heaven nor earth; and why? because they would be superior to angels, and do not acknowledge that they need any helps by which they might by degrees, according to their weakness, ascend up to God himself. Now this is to seek God without the covenant or without the word. This is the reason why the Prophet here unites father Abraham to God himself; it was done that the Jews might know that they were confined by certain limits, in order that they might in humility make progress in God's school, and be carried by degrees into heaven: for God, as it has been said, had deposited his covenant with Abraham. But yet as they might have depended on a mortal man, the Prophet adds a corrective—that they had been *created by God;* for they were not to separate their father Abraham from the very author of the covenant.

This passage then is worthy of special notice; for men from the beginning and in all ages have been inclined to the

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two vices which I have mentioned; and at this day we see that some indulge their dreams and despise the outward preaching of the word; for many fanatics say, that there is no need of rudiments or of the first elements, since God has promised that the sons of the Church would be spiritual. Hence Satan by such delusions strives to draw us away from pure simplicity of doctrine. It is therefore necessary to set up this shield—that God is not exhibited to us without Abraham, that is, without a Prophet and an interpreter. The Papists are also sunk in the same mud; for they have always the fathers in their mouths, but make no account of God. This is also very preposterous. Let us then remember that God is not to be separated from his word, and that the authority of men is of no account, when they depart from it. And the Prophet confirms the same thing at the end of the verse, when he speaks of the covenant of the fathers; for he does not here simply commend the covenant of the fathers, as the Turks might do, or as it is done by Papists and Jews; but he means the covenant which God had given, and which the holy patriarchs faithfully handed down to their posterity, according to what Paul says in the twenty-second chapter of the Acts, when speaking of his father's religion; he did not speak of it as heathens might do of their religion, but he took it as granted that the law promulgated by Moses was not his invention, but had God as its author. It now follows—

11. Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

11. Perfidè egit Iehudah, et abominatio facta est in Israele et Ierusalem; quia polluit Iehudah sanctuarium Iehovæ quod dilexit (*vel*, sanctitatem; *dicemus de hac voce*) et matrimonium contraxerunt cum filia dei alieni.

The Prophet now explains how the Jews departed from the covenant of their fathers, and he exaggerates their sin and says, that abomination was done in Israel; as though he had said, that this perfidy was abominable. Some render the verb בגד, *begad*,[1] transgressed, and so it is often

[1] It is בגדה in the feminine gender, because by Judah is meant the tribe

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taken in Hebrew: but as in the last verse the Prophet had said, בגד, *nubegad*, "Why do we deal perfidiously every one with his brother?" I doubt not but that it is repeated here in the same sense. But as I have already stated, he shows the crime to be detestable, and says that it existed in *Judah and in Jerusalem*. God had indeed, as it is well known, preferred that tribe to others; and it was not a common favour that the Jews almost alone returned to their own country, while others nearly all remained in their dispersion. He adds *Jerusalem*, not for honour's sake, but for greater reproach, as though he had said, that not only some of the race of Abraham were subject to this condemnation, but that even the Jews were so, who had been allowed to return to their own country, and that even the holy city rendered itself subject to this reproof, in which the temple was, the sanctuary of God, which was then alone the true one in the whole world. By these circumstances then does the Prophet enhance their crime.

But he immediately comes to particulars: *Polluted*, he says, *has Judah the holiness of Jehovah, which he loved*;[1] that is, because they individually indulged their lusts, and procured for themselves wives from heathen nations.

or the family; so Ephraim is often regarded. See Hos. iv. 18; v. 9; ix. 13. We find here Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem mentioned; and probably because the purpose was to include the whole of the people, as some of Israel or of the ten tribes were among them.—*Ed.*

[1] This last clause has been variously explained: "whom," *i.e.*, Judah, "he loved," or, "which," *i.e.*, holiness, "he loved," or, "which he," Judah, "had loved." The last seems the most natural construction according to the tenor of the passage, if אשר be a relative; for Judah is the subject in the sentence. Judah did in former times love and delight in that separation which God had made and appointed between his people and the heathen world. To say that God loved it seems an odd idea; but to say that Judah delighted in it was much to the purpose, and added for the sake of enhancing the guilt of that generation.

Dathius gives this version,—

For he profanes Judah, the holiness of Jehovah,
Who loves and marries a foreign wife.

But more suitable to the genius of the language would be this,—

For profaned has Judah the holiness of Jehovah,
Because he has loved and married
The daughter of a strange God.

The word אשר is often a conjunction as well as a relative; *because, for, inasmuch as*. See Gen. xxxiv. 13; Deut. xxx. 16; 1 Sam. xv. 15.—*Ed.*

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Some take קֹדֶשׁ, *kodash*, for the sanctuary or the temple; others for the keeping of the law; but I prefer to apply it to the covenant itself; and we might suitably take it in a collective sense, except the simpler meaning be more approved—that Judah polluted his separation. As to the Prophet's object and the subject itself, he charges them here, I have no doubt, with profanation, because the Jews rendered themselves vile, though God had consecrated them to himself. They had then *polluted holiness*, even when they had been separated from the world; for they had disregarded so great an honour, by which they might have been pre-eminent, had they continued in their integrity. It may be also taken collectively, *they have polluted holiness*, that is, they have polluted that nation which has been separated from other nations: but as this exposition may seem hard and somewhat strained, I am inclined to think that what is here meant is that separation by which the Jews were known from other nations. But yet what I have stated may serve to remove whatever obscurity there may be. And that this holiness ought to be referred to that gratuitous election by which God had adopted the Jews as his peculiar people, is evident from what the Prophet says, that they married foreign wives.[1]

We then see the purpose of this passage, which is to show,—that the Jews were ungrateful to God, because they mingled with heathen nations, and knowingly and wilfully cast aside that glory by which God had adorned them by choosing them, as Moses says, to be to him a royal priesthood. (Exod. xix. 6.) Holiness, we know, was much recommended to the Jews, in order that they might not abandon themselves to any of the pollutions of the heathens. Hence God had forbidden them under the law to take foreign wives, except they were first purified, as we find in Deut. xxi. 11, 12; if any one wished to marry a captive, she was

[1] "The holiness of Jehovah," *i.e.*, the holiness required and enjoined by Jehovah. Most agree that what is meant is the separation from any alliance with heathens. See Deut. vii. 3. Ezra mentions Israel as "the holy seed," ch. ix. 2. See also Jer. ii. 3. *Marckius*, after *Jerome* and *Cyril*, takes this view, and so do *Henry*, *Scott*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. —*Ed.*

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to have her head shaven and her nails pared; by which it was intimated, that such women were impure, and that their husbands would be contaminated, except they were first purified. And yet it was not wholly a blameless thing, when one observed the law as to a captive: but it was a lust abominable to God, when they were not content with their own nation, and burnt in love with strange women. As however the Jews, like all mortals without exception, were inclined to corruptions, God purposed to keep them together as one people, lest the wife by her flatteries should draw the husband away from the pure and legitimate worship of God. And Moses tells us, that there was a crafty counsel given by Balaam when he saw that the people could not be conquered in open war; he at length invented this artifice, that the heathens should offer to them their wives and their daughters. It hence happened that the people provoked God's wrath, as we find it recorded in Num. xxv. 4.

As then the Jews after their return had again lapsed into this corruption, it is not without reason that the Prophet so severely reproves them, and that he says, that by marrying strange women they had polluted holiness, or that separation, which was their great honour, as God had adopted them alone as his people; and he calls it a holiness which God loved. Thus their crime was doubled, because God had not only bound them to himself, but he had also embraced them gratuitously. For if the cause of the separation be enquired, whether they excelled other nations, or whether they had any worthiness or merit? the answer is, No; but God loved them freely. For by the word love, the Prophet means the mere kindness and bounty of God, with which he favoured Abraham and his race, without regard to any worthiness or excellency. He therefore condemns them for this ingratitude, because they had not only departed from the covenant which the Lord had made with their fathers, but had also neglected and despised that gratuitous love, which ought to have softened even their iron hearts. For if God had found anything in them as a reason why he preferred them to other nations, they might have been more excusable, at least they might have extenuated their fault; but since God had

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adopted them as his peculiar people, though they were unworthy and wholly undeserving, they must surely have been extremely brutish, to have thus despised the gratuitous favour of God. Their baseness then is increased, as I have said, by this circumstance,—that so great a kindness of God did not turn their hearts to obedience.

At the end of the verse the Prophet makes known, as I have already stated, their profanation; they had *married* the daughters *of another god.* By way of reproach he calls them the daughters of a strange god. He might have simply said foreign daughters; but he intended here to imply a comparison between the God of Israel and idols: as though he had said, "Whence have these wives come to you? from idols. Ye ought then to have hated them as monsters: had you any religion in your heart, what but detestable to you must have been everything which may have come from idols? but your hearts have become attached to the daughters of false gods."

And we find that this vice had been condemned by Moses, and branded with reproach, before the giving of the Law, when he said, that the human race had been corrupted, because the sons of God married the daughters of men, (Gen. vi. 2,) even because the posterity of Seth, who were born of the holy family, degraded themselves and polluted that small portion, which was holy and consecrated to God, by mixing with the world; for the whole world had at that time departed from God, except the descendants of Seth. The Lord then had before the Law marked this lust with perpetual disgrace; but when the Law itself which ought to have been like a rampart, again condemned it, was it not a perverseness wholly inexcusable, when the wantonness of the people broke through all restraints? He then adds—

12. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

12. Excidet Iehova virum qui fecerit hoc, excitantem et respondentem, ex tabernaculis Iacob, et qui adducit oblationem Iehovæ exercituum.

The Prophet here teaches us, that neither the priests nor the people would go unpunished, because they had mingled

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with the pollutions of the heathens, and profaned and violated the covenant of God. God then says, *Cut off* (the word means to scrape off or to blot out) *shall God the man who has done this, the mover*, or prompter, *as well as the respondent.*[1] *Jerome* renders the last words, the master and the disciple; and interpreters vary. Some indeed explain the terms allegorically, and apply them to the dead; but by the mover, I have no doubt, he understands every one who was in power, and could command others, and by the respondent the man who was subject to the authority of his master. The masters then prompted or roused, for it belonged to them to command; and the servants responded, for it was their duty to receive orders and to obey them. It is the same as though the Prophet had said, that God would punish this perfidy, without passing by any, so that he would spare neither the common people nor the chief men: and he also adds the priests, intimating, that the priests themselves would not be excepted.

In short, he denounces punishment on the Jews universally, and shows that however prevalent had this impiety become everywhere, and that though every one thought that whatever was commonly practised was lawful, yet God would become an avenger, and would include in the same punishment both the masters and the servants, and would not exempt the priests, who considered themselves safe by a peculiar privilege. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are so inclined to all kinds of wickedness, we may learn to confine ourselves within the limits of thy word, and thus restrain all the desires of our flesh; and

[1] Him that teacheth and him that answereth.—*Newcome.*
or,
Him that passeth out and him that returneth.—*Ib.*
Him that watcheth and him that answereth.—*Henderson.*
The teacher and the scholar.—*Drusius* and *Grotius.*
The most literal rendering is,—
The rouser and the respondent, עֵר וְעֹנֶה.
It seems to mean the leader in the faction and his assistant, the bold avower of his wickedness and his timid follower. Such we find to be in all factions.—*Ed.*

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that whatever Satan may contrive to draw us here and there, may we continually proceed in obedience to thy word; and being mindful of that eternal election, by which thou hast been pleased gratuitously to adopt us, and also of that calling by which thy eternal election has been confirmed, and by which thou hast received us in thine only-begotten Son, may we go on in our course to the end, and so cleave, by persevering faith, to Christ thy Son, that we may at length be gathered into the enjoyment of that eternal kingdom which he has purchased for us by his blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-sixth.

13. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth *it* with good will at your hand.

13. Et hoc secundo fecistis, operiendo lachrymis altare Iehovæ fletu et ploratu, eo quòd amplius non respicitur ad oblationem, et non suscipitur beneplacitum è manu vestra.

THE Prophet amplifies again the fault of the priests, because the people, when they perceived that God was adverse to them, found no means of pacifying him. And when men have an idea that God is inexorable to them, every zeal for religion must necessarily decay; and hence it is said in Psalm cxxx. 4—"With thee is propitiation, that thou mayest be feared." As the people then gained nothing by sacrificing, they had now nearly fallen off from divine worship. This evil, a most grievous one, the Prophet says, was to be justly ascribed to the priests; for as they were become polluted, how could their persons have been accepted by God, that they might be mediators to expiate sins and to pacify God?

This is the real meaning of the Prophet, which none of the interpreters have perceived. The Rabbins think that the priests are here reproved, because their wives filled the altar in the sanctuary with weeping, because they saw that their husbands did not faithfully treat them, according to the law of marriage; and almost all have agreed with them. Thus then they explain the verse—*Ye have in the second place done this;* that is, "That sin was of itself sufficiently

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grievous, when ye suffered lean victims to be sacrificed to me, as it were in mockery; but in addition to this comes your sin against your wives, who continually complain and deplore their condition before the altar of God, even because they are not loved by you, as the right of marriage requires." They thus refer the tears, the weeping, and lamentation, to the wives of the priests, which were so cruelly treated by their husbands: they were not able to do anything else than to fill God's sanctuary with their constant complaints. Hence they render מאין עוד פנות, *main oud penut*, "I will not therefore regard," or, "no one regards;" but both versions are not only obscure, but wholly pervert the sense of the Prophet.

But what I have already stated is the most suitable—that it was to be ascribed to the priests that no one could from the heart worship God, at least with a cheerful and willing mind; for God was implacable to the people, because the only way of obtaining favour under the law was when the priests, who represented the Mediator, humbly entreated pardon in the name of the whole people. But how could God attend to the prayers of the priests when they had polluted his altar by the filth of wickedness? We then see the object of this amplification—*Ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping and wailing.* The praises of God ought to have resounded in the temple, according to what is said —"Praise, O God, waits for thee in Zion." (Psalm lxv. 1.) And the principal sacrifice was, that the people exercised themselves in contemplating the blessings of God, and in thanksgiving. But he says that none went forth before the altar with a cheerful mind, but all were sad and sorrowful, because they found that God was severe and rigid.

And the reason is added—מאין עוד פנות, *main oud penut*, literally, "Is it not any more by regarding," &c.? It is easy to see how far they depart from the meaning of the Prophet who read—"They shall therefore offer no more;" for is this to be applied to God? Others also, who give this rendering—"I shall not therefore accept," pervert also the very letter of the text. But the most appropriate meaning is this—that all wept and groaned before the altar, because

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they saw that they came there without any advantage, that their sacrifices did not please God, and that the whole worship was in vain, inasmuch as God did not answer their prayers. The Prophet ascribes the fault to the priests, that God did not turn to mercy, so as to forgive the people when they sacrificed. With weeping, then, he says, was the altar filled or covered, because God received not *what pleased him from their hand;* that is, because no victims pleased him which were offered by polluted and impure hands.[1] He afterwards joins—

14. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

14. Et dixistis, In quo (*vel*, super quo)? Quoniam Iehova testificatus est inter te et inter uxorem adolescentiæ tuæ, quam tu fraudasti, (*vel*, erga quam tu prævaricatus es,) cum tamen ipsa esset consors tua, et uxor fœderis tui.

The Prophet tells us here as before how prone the priests

[1] It is not easy to give a version of this verse. *Henderson* renders the first line thus—

And this ye have done the second time.

The reference is, he says, to the repetition of the evil which had been corrected under Ezra, ch. ix. and x. This seems probable; but we may view this "second," or again, with regard to the previous denunciation. What are regarded as verbs in the infinitive mood are in my view participial nouns; the last, לְקֹחַת, is evidently so. Then the literal rendering would be this—

And this again ye do—
Covering with tears the altar,
Weeping and groaning,
Because *there is* no more turning to the offering,
Or the receiving of what is acceptable from your hand.

That מֵאֵין is to be rendered "because not," or, "inasmuch as not," is evident from other places. See Jer. x. 6; xix. 11. "Turning" signifies having a regard to. "What is acceptable," רָצוֹן, is rendered "δεκτον—acceptable," in the *Sept.*; "ἐυδοκίαν—good-will," by *Aq.*; "τὸ ευδοκημένον—what is approved," by *Sym.*; "τέλειον—perfect," by *Theod.*

The difference between *Calvin* and most expositors after him, as well as before him, is, that he regarded the lamentation to have been by the priests and people, and they by the repudiated wives. The cause of the weeping, as stated here, was the rejection of the offerings, as declared by the Prophet; and this seems enough to confirm *Calvin's* view.

The priests and people had been denounced for their wickedness, especially for marrying strange wives. After this denunciation they "again" went to the altar and wept because God would not receive their sacrifices; and they did this without amending their ways. Then in the next verse the Prophet explains why God would not receive their offerings.—*Ed.*

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were to make a clamour, and it is a very common thing with hypocrites immediately to set up a shield to cover their vices whenever they are reproved; and hence it appears, that men are in a manner fascinated by Satan, when they attain such hardness as to dare to answer God, and with obstreperous words to repel all warnings. Malachi has several times already used this mode of speaking; we may hence conclude, that the people had become then so hardened that warnings were of no account with them. But he mentions one particular, by which it seems evident that they had lapsed into vices which were not to be borne. There is indeed no doubt but that he points out one of the many vices which prevailed. There is then in this verse an instance of stating one thing for the whole, as though he had said, "Your hypocrisy is extremely gross; but, to omit other things, by what pretext can you excuse this perfidy—that there is no conjugal fidelity among you? Were there any integrity and a sense of religion in men, they would surely appear in their conjugal connexion; but ye have cast away all shame, and have taken to yourselves many wives. There is then no ground for you to think that you can escape by evasions, because this one glaring vice sufficiently proves your guilt." This is the import of the Prophet's answer.

We have indeed seen that the priests were implicated in other vices; the Prophet then does not now charge them with perfidy as though they were free from other sins, but he meant to show, as I have already said, by one thing, how wickedly and shamelessly they sought to evade God's judgment, though they had violated the marriage pledge, which was wholly to destroy the very order of nature; for there can be, as it has been already said, no chastity in social life except the bond of marriage be preserved, for marriage, so to speak, is the fountain of mankind.

But in order to press the matter more on the priests, he calls their attention to the fact that God is the founder of marriage, *Testified has Jehovah*, he says, *between thee and thy wife*.[1] He intimates in these words, that when a mar-

[1] Or, "a witness has Jehovah been between thee and thy wife." But *Theodoret*, *Cyril*, and *Jerome*, and also *Cocceius*, refer this to God's testi-

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riage takes place between a man and a woman, God presides and requires a mutual pledge from both. Hence Solomon, in Prov. ii. 17, calls marriage the covenant of God, for it is superior to all human contracts. So also Malachi declares, that God is as it were the stipulator, who by his authority joins the man to the woman, and sanctions the alliance: God then has *testified between thee and thy wife*, as though he had said, "Thou hast violated not only all human laws, but also the compact which God himself has consecrated, and which ought justly to be deemed more sacred than all other compacts: as then God has testified between thee and thy wife, and thou now deceivest her, how darest thou to come to the altar? and how canst thou think that God will be pleased with thy sacrifices or regard thy oblations?"

He calls her *the wife of his youth*, because the more filthy is the lust when husbands cast away conjugal love as to those wives whom they have married in their youth. The bond of marriage is indeed in all cases inviolable, even between the old, but it is a circumstance which increases the turpitude of the deed, when any one alienates himself from a wife whom he married when a girl and in the flower of her age: for youth conciliates love; and we also see that when a husband and his wife have lived together for many years, mutual love prevails between them to extreme old age, because their hearts were united together in their youth. It is not then without reason that this circumstance is mentioned, for the lust of the priests was the more filthy and as it were the more monstrous, because they forsook wives whom they ought to have regarded with the tenderest love, as they had married them when they were young: *Thou hast dealt unfaithfully with her*, he says, *though she was thy consort and the wife of thy covenant.*

He calls her a consort, or companion, or associate,[1] because

mony in the first institution of marriage, in Gen. ii. 24. More suitable to the context no doubt is to consider God as a witness to the marriage contract; and this is the view taken by *Drusius*, *Henry*, *Scott*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*.—*Ed.*

[1] "Κοινωνός—partner," by the *Septuagint*; "ὁμόσαρκος—of the same flesh," by *Cyril*; "particeps—partner," by *Jerome*; "companion," in our version, and by *Newcome* and *Henderson*. The word comes from חָבַר, to

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marriage, we know, is contracted on this condition—that the wife is to become as it were the half part of the man. As then the bond of marriage is inseparable, the Prophet here goads the priests, yea, touches them to the quick, when he reproves them for being unmindful of what was natural, inasmuch as they had blotted out of their minds the memory of a most sacred covenant. The *wife of thy covenant* is to be taken for a covenanted wife, that is, "The wife who has been united to thee by God's authority, that there might be no separation; but all integrity is violated, and as it were abolished." He then adds—

15. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

15. Et non unum fecit? et exuperantia spiritus illi? et quorsum unum? quærens semen Dei: ergo custodiamini in spiritu vestro; et in uxorem adolescentiæ tuæ ne transgrediatur (*vel*, ne fraudes; *est mutatio personæ, ponitur enim tertia persona loco secundæ.*)

There is in this verse some obscurity, and hence it has been that no interpreter has come to the meaning of the Prophet. The Rabbins almost all agree that Abraham is spoken of here. Were we to receive this view a two-fold meaning might be given. It may be an objection,—"Has not one done this?" that is, has not Abraham, who is the one father of the nation, given us an example? for he married many wives: and thus many explain the passage, as though the priests raised an objection and defended the corruption just condemned by the example of Abraham,—"Has not one done this while yet an excellency of spirit was in him?" We indeed know how prone men are to pretend the authority of fathers when they wish to cover their own vices.

Others prefer regarding the words as spoken by the Prophet himself, and at the same time say that there is here an anticipation of an objection, and think that an occasion for an excuse is here cut off, as though the Prophet had said, "Did not Abraham, when he was one alone, do this?" For as the Jews might have adduced the example of Abraham,

conjoin, to couple, to fit together. "Partner" perhaps would be the most appropriate term.—*Ed.*

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the interpreters, whose opinion I now refer to, think that a difference is here stated, as though he had said, "Ye reason badly, for every one of you is led to polygamy by the lust of your flesh; but it was far otherwise with Abraham, for he was one, that is, alone;" and in Isaiah Abraham is called one on account of his having no children. The meaning then they think is this, "Was not Abraham forced by necessity to take another wife? even because he had no child and no hope of the promised seed. Lust then did not stimulate your father Abraham, as it does you, but a desire of having an offspring." And they think, that this view is confirmed by what follows, "And why alone seeking the seed of God?" that is, the object of holy Abraham was far otherwise than to indulge his lust; for he sought that holy seed, the hope of which was taken away from him on account of the barrenness of his wife, and of her great age. When therefore Abraham saw that his wife was barren, and that she could no more conceive on account of her old age, he had recourse to the last remedy: hence the mistake of Abraham might have been excused, since his object was right; for he sought the seed of God, the seed in which all nations were to be blessed. Thus far have I told you what others think.

I thought twelve years ago that this passage ought to have been otherwise rendered in the French Bibles, and that אחד, *acked*, ought to be read in the objective case; "Has he not made one?" *Jerome* seems to me to have had a better notion of what the Prophet means than what others have taught; but he could not attain the real meaning, and therefore stopped as it were in the middle of his course. He read the word in the nominative case, "Has not one," that is, God, "made them?" and then he added, "And in him alone," that is, Abraham, "was an exuberant spirit." We see how he dared not to assert anything, nor did he explain what was necessary. The sense is indeed suspended, and is even frigid, if we say, "Has not one made them?" but if we read, "Has he not made one?"[1] there is no am-

[1] The position of the words shows that it is a question, for there is no interrogative particle. So it is in our language, "Has he not made one?" And that it is a question, is evident from what follows, "and why one?"—*Ed.*

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biguity. It is a common thing in Hebrew, we know, that the name of God is often not expressed, when he is referred to; for so great is He, that his name may be easily understood, though not expressed. It ought not therefore to confuse us, that the Prophet withholds the name of God, and mentions a verb without its subject, for such is the usage, as I have said, of the Hebrew language.

I proceed now to explain the meaning of the Prophet. *Has he not made one?* that is, Was not God content with one man, when he instituted marriage? and *yet the residue of the Spirit was in him.* The Rabbins take שאר, *shar*, as meaning excellence; but I know not what reason have induced them, except that they ventured to change the sense of the word, because they could not otherwise extricate themselves; for the mistake, that Abraham is spoken of here, had wholly possessed their minds. What then is רוח שאר, *shar ruch?* Excellence of spirit, say they; but שאר, *shar*, we know, is residue or remnant: what then remains of anything is called שאר, *shar;* for the verb means to remain and to lean. Here then the Prophet takes the residue of the Spirit, so to speak, for overflowing power; for God could have given to one man two or three wives; inasmuch as the Spirit failed him not in forming one woman: as he inspired Eve with life, so also he might have created other women and imparted to them his Spirit. He might then have given two or four or ten women to one man; for there was a spirit remaining in him. We now then understand what the Prophet means at the beginning of this verse.

But before we proceed farther, we must bear in mind his object, which was, to break down all those frivolous pretences by which the Jews sought to cover their perfidy. He says, that in marriage we ought to recognise an ordinance divinely appointed, or, to speak more distinctly, that the institution of marriage is a perpetual law, which it is not right to violate: there is therefore no cause for men to devise for themselves various laws, for God's authority is here to be regarded alone; and this is more clearly explained in Matt. xix. 8; where Christ, refuting the objection of the Jews as to

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divorce, says, "From the beginning it was not so." Though the law allowed a bill of divorce to be given to wives, yet Christ denies this to be right,—by what argument? even because the institution was not of that kind; for it was, as it has been said, an inviolable bond. So now our Prophet reasons, *Has not God made one?* that is, "consider within yourselves whether God, when he created man and instituted marriage, gave many wives to one man? By no means. Ye see then that spurious and contrary to the character of a true and pure marriage is everything that does not harmonise with its first institution."

But some one may ask here, why the Prophet says that God made one? for this seems to refer to the man and not to the woman: to this I answer, that man with the woman is called one, according to what Moses says, "God created man; male and female created he them," (Gen. i. 17.) After having said that man was created, he adds by way of explanation, that man, both male and female, was created. Hence when he speaks of man, the male makes as it were one-half, and the female the other; for when we speak of the whole human race, one-half doubtless consists of men, and the other half of women. So also when we come to individuals, the husband is as it were the half of the man, and the woman is the other half. I speak of the ordinary state of things; for if any one objects and says, that bachelors are not then complete or perfect men, the objection is frivolous: but as men were created, that every one should have his own wife, I say, that husband and wife make but one whole man. This then is the reason why the Prophet says, that one man was made by God; for he united the man to the woman, and intended that they should be partners, so to speak, under one yoke. And in this explanation there is nothing strained; for it is evident that the Prophet here calls the attention of the Jews to the true character of marriage; and this could not have been otherwise known than from the very institution of God, which is, as we have said, a perpetual and inviolable law; for God created man, even male and female: and Christ also has repeated this sentence, and carefully explained it in the passage which we have quoted.

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And here the Prophet sharply goads the Jews, as though they wished to overcome God, or to be more wise than he; *Had he not*, he says, *an exuberance of spirit?* He takes spirit not for wisdom, but for that hidden influence by which God vivifies men. Could not God, he says, have put forth his Spirit to create many wives for one man? but his purpose was to create one pair, to make man a husband and a wife: as God then was not without a remaining Spirit, and yet did not exceed this measure, it hence follows, that the law of marriage is violated, when man seeks for himself many wives. The meaning of the Prophet is now, I think, sufficiently clear.

It follows, *And wherefore one,* ומה האחד, *vame, eached?* The interrogatory particle מה, *me*, refers to the cause, end, form, or manner; we may therefore properly render it, *For what*, or wherefore, has God made *one?* even to *seek the seed of God.* The seed of God is to be taken for what is legitimate; for what is excellent is often called God in Hebrew, and also what is free from all vice and blemish. He sought then the seed of God, that is, he instituted marriage, that legitimate and pure offspring might be brought forth. Hence then the Prophet indirectly shows, that all are spurious who proceed from polygamy, because they cannot be deemed legitimate children; nor ought any to be so counted but those who are born according to God's institution. When a husband violates his pledged faith to his wife, and takes another, as he subverts the ordinance of marriage, so he cannot be a legitimate father. We now perceive why the Prophet says, that it was God's purpose to unite only one wife to one man, in order that they might beget legitimate offspring; for he shows by the effect how frivolous were the evasions which the Jews had recourse to; for however they might contend, their very offspring would prove them liars, as it would be spurious.

He then draws this conclusion, Therefore, *watch ye over your spirit;* that is, "Take heed lest any should deceive the wife of his covenant." After having shown how perversely they violated the marriage vow who rushed into polygamy, he here counsels and exhorts them; and this is the best mode of teaching, to show first what is right and lawful,

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and then to add exhortations. The Prophet then endeavoured first to convince the Jews that they were guilty of a nefarious crime: for otherwise his exhortation would not have been received, as they would have always a ready objection, "It is lawful for us to do so, for we follow the example of our father Abraham; and further, this has been permitted for a long time, and God would have never suffered it, were it wrong, to prevail for so many ages among the people: it hence follows, that thou condemnest what is lawful." It was necessary, in the first place, to remove all these false pretences: then follows the exhortation in its proper order, *Watch over your spirit;* for he speaks of what has been, as it were, sufficiently proved.[1] It now follows—

16. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

16. Si odio habeas (quisque odio habet,) dimittat (*i.e.*, uxorem) dicit Iehovah Deus Israel; et operit, (*vel*, texit) violentiam sub vestimento suo, dicit Iehovah exercituum: ergo custodiamini in spiritu vestro et ne fraudetis.

Here again the Prophet exaggerates the crime which the priests regarded as nothing; for he says, that they sinned more grievously than if they had repudiated their wives. We indeed know that repudiation, properly speaking, had never been allowed by God; for though it was not punished under the law, yet it was not permitted.[2] It was the same as with a magistrate, who is constrained to bear many things which he does not approve; for we cannot so deal with mankind as to restrain all vices. It is indeed desirable, that no vice should be tolerated; but we must have a regard to what is possible. Hence Moses has specified no punishment, ac-

[1] This is a most lucid and satisfactory explanation of a text which has been deemed, and is still deemed by some, difficult. Some moderns have gone back to the track of the ancients, but needlessly. *Newcome's* attempt at a revision of the text is wholly useless, and renders the passage more abstruse.—*Ed.*

[2] This is not strictly correct, see Deut. xxiv. 2; and our Saviour allows that Moses "suffered" the Israelites to put away their wives, though he says that it was for the hardness of their hearts. See Matt. xix. 8.—*Ed.*

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cording to the heinousness of the crime, if one repudiated his wife; and yet it was never permitted.

But if a comparison be made, Malachi says, that it is a lighter crime to dismiss a wife than to marry many wives. We hence learn how abominable polygamy is in the sight of God. I do not consider polygamy to be what the foolish Papists have made it, who call not those polygamists who have many wives at the same time, but those who marry another when the former one is dead. This is gross ignorance. Polygamy, properly so called, is when a person takes many wives, as it was commonly done in the East: and those nations, we know, have always been libidinous, and never observed the marriage vow. As then their lasciviousness was so great that they were like brute beasts, every one married several wives; and this abuse continues at this day among the Turks and the Persians and other nations. Here, however, where God compares polygamy with divorce, he says that polygamy is the worse and more detestable crime; for the husband impurely connects himself with another woman, and then, not only deals unfaithfully with his wife to whom he is bound, but also forcibly detains her: thus his crime is doubled. For if he replies and says that he keeps the wife to whom he is bound, he is yet an adulterer as to the second wife: thus he blends, as they say, holy with profane things; and then to adultery and lasciviousness he adds cruelty, for he holds under his authority a miserable woman, who would prefer death to such a condition; for we know what power jealousy has over women. And when any one introduces a harlot, how can a lawful wife bear such an indignity without being miserably tormented?

This then is the reason why the Prophet now says, *If thou hatest, dismiss;* not that he grants indulgence to divorce, as we have said, but that he might by this circumstance enhance the crime; and hence he adds, *For he covers by a cloak his violence.* Some interpreters take violence here for spoil or prey, and think that the wife is thus called who is tyrannically compelled to remain with an adulterer, when yet she sees a harlot in her house, by whom she is driven from her conjugal bed: but this is too strained and too re-

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mote from the letter of the text. The Prophet here, I doubt not, shakes off from the Jews their false mask, because they thought that they could cover over their vice by retaining their first wives. "What else is this," he says, "but to cover by a cloak your violence, or at least to excuse it? for ye do not openly manifest it: but God is not deceived, nor can his eye be dazzled by such a disguise: though then your iniquity is covered by a cloak, it is not yet hid from God; nay, it is thus doubled, because ye exercise your cruelty at home; for it would be better for robbers to remain in the wood and there to kill strangers, than to entice guests to their houses and to kill them there and to plunder them under the pretext of hospitality. This is the way in which you act; for ye destroy the bond of marriage, and ye afterwards deceive your miserable wives, and yet ye force them by your tyranny to continue at your houses, and thus ye torment your miserable wives, who might have enjoyed their freedom, if divorce had been granted them."[1]

[1] The interpretation given of the first clause of this verse is according to the *Septuagint* and the *Targum*, and has been adopted by *Cyril*, *Jerome*, *Theodoret*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, *Dathius*, and others. Our version is derived from *Jun.* and *Trem.*, and *Piscator*, and has been followed by *Marckius*, *Lowth*, *Scott*, *Adam Clarke*, *Newcome*, and *Henderson*. The second clause has been variously interpreted both by the ancients and the moderns. The *Septuagint* make "violence," or wrong, the nominative to "cover," and the *Targum* the accusative. "Iniquity shall cover his garment," is the version of *Jerome*. "For he covers violence *as* with his garment," has been the version of others; which corresponds with the *Targum*, as the former does with the *Septuagint*.

The most natural construction of the first part is no doubt what our version exhibits; the meaning of the second is less obvious: but they seem connected. What seems to be said is,—that God hates the divorcer, and him also who maltreats his wife without divorcing her. Then we may give this literal rendering,—

For he hates the divorcer, (or him who puts away,)
Saith Jehovah, the God of Israel;
And the coverer of outrage on his own garment,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

To speak of God here in the third person is in accordance with the preceding verses. "His own garment," according to *Venema*, *Dathius*, and *Henderson*, is a figurative designation of a wife. See Ruth iii. 9; Ezek. xvi. 8.

The condemning of divorce is more suitable to this place, than any reference to its permission; because in the previous part the allusion is evidently made to the first institution of marriage, and not to any posterior modification.—*Ed.*

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He concludes again with these words, *Watch over your spirit;* that is, "Take heed; for this is an intolerable wickedness before God, however you may endeavour to extenuate its heinousness."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that though we daily in various ways violate the covenant which thou hast been pleased to make with us in thine only-begotten Son, we may not yet be dealt with according to what our defection, yea, the many defections by which we daily provoke thy wrath against us, do fully deserve; but suffer and bear with us kindly, and at the same time strengthen us that we may persevere in the truth and perform to the end the pledge we have given to thee, and which thou didst require from us in our baptism, and that we may each of us so conduct ourselves towards our brethren, and husbands towards their wives, that we may cherish that unity of spirit which thou hast consecrated between us by the blood of thine own Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-seventh.

17. Ye have wearied the Lord with your words: yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him?* When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?

17. Fatigastis Iehovam in verbis vestris, et dixistis, In quo fatigavimus eum? Quum dicitis, Quicunque facit malum gratus est in oculis Iehovæ, et in ipsis se oblectat; vel, Ubi Deus judicii?

THE Prophet here reproves the Jews who expostulated with God in their adversity, as though he had undeservedly forsaken them, and had not brought them immediate help. Thus are hypocrites wont to do; unless God immediately assists them, they not only indirectly complain, but also break out into open blasphemies; for they think that God is bound to them, and hence they assail him more boldly, and even with greater freedom and insolence. It is indeed a proof of true piety when we patiently submit to the judgments of God, and when, as Jeremiah teaches us by his own example, "we sustain his wrath, because we know that we have sinned." (Jer. viii. 14.) But as hypocrites are conscious of nothing wrong, (for they flatter themselves, and stupify

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their own consciences,) because they examine not themselves, they think that God acts unjustly towards them when he does not immediately bring them aid. Such was the dishonesty of the people of whom the Prophet now speaks.

He says that they had *wearied* God, that is, that they had been troublesome to him by their clamorous complaints; for the verb יגע, *igo*, means to be weary; he says then that they unreasonably complained of God's slowness. It is indeed a mode of speaking taken from men, for we know that no passions belong to God; but as elsewhere God reproves them because they saddened his Spirit, (Psalm cvi. 33,) so he says here that they *wearied* him. We now perceive the Prophet's meaning.

But there is a dilemma presented in the words; for the Jews thought that God favoured the wicked, inasmuch as he did not immediately punish them, or that he was now unlike himself, and forgot his own nature. The difficulty or the dilemma appears not at the first view, as they seemed to have repeated the same thing. But in the first clause they accuse God of injustice; and in the second they intimate that there is no God, for he cannot exist without exercising judgment. Then the passage contains two clauses differing from each other—"God has either changed his nature, and so is no God, or he favours our enemies; for he does not immediately execute vengeance." We see then that they concluded that God either acted unjustly, or that there was no God. But we have mentioned the cause of this blasphemy—the Jews did not examine themselves, and therefore did not confess that they deserved these chastisements. They were like vicious horses, who kick and fling, though gently treated by their riders.

But such insolence is now seen in all masked men, who vauntingly profess religion when they are treated according to their own wishes; but when God deals more sharply with them, they not only murmur, but vomit forth, as I have already said, impious slanders against him, as though he did not render to them the reward due to their just dealings. Admonished by this example, let us learn that it is true wisdom to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God,

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(1 Peter v. 6;) and that though he may suspend the granting of our prayers, we ought still to bear, not impatiently, what is hard and severe, and also to subdue our feelings, and to seek from them the Spirit of meekness, to retain us in a tranquil submission.

He says that they still replied—*In what have we wearied thee?*[1] Here he strongly reproves their hardness, because they did not become wise through the rebuke given them, but regarded with scorn the words of the Prophet, by which we clearly see that they must have been convinced of their guilt, had they not been doubly stupid. It was an intolerable reproach cast on God, to say that he favoured the ungodly, and was pleased with their crimes; for God would thus not only rule as a tyrant, but also subvert all order. But nothing is more contrary to his nature than to hold forth his hand to the ungodly as though he had an alliance with them. As this then was an evident impiety, it was a monstrous stupidity to ask in what they wearied God; they ought indeed to have known that he regards nothing as precious as his own honour; and yet, as though Malachi had unjustly reproved them, they opposed him with an iron front, according to similar instances which we have before observed; for though they were covenant-breakers as to marriage, though they defrauded God in the tenths, though they cunningly evaded the Prophets, they yet as it were wiped their mouths and asked, In what had they sinned? The Prophet shows that they were become so hardened in their contumacy that they daringly rejected all admonitions; for they did not ask this as though it was a doubtful thing, nor can it be concluded from their words that they were teachable; but it was the same as if they were armed, ready for a contest, yea, armed with effrontery and perverseness; for they no doubt despised and ridiculed the Prophet's reproof.

He then answers them—*When ye say, Whosoever doeth evil is acceptable in the eyes of Jehovah, and in them he delights.* The word rendered "acceptable" is טוֹב, *thub;* but

[1] There is a stronger word employed by the *Septuagint*—"παρωξύναμεν —have we irritated, *or*, provoked."—*Ed.*

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such is its meaning often in Hebrew.[1] What they said was, that the ungodly and the wicked pleased God, even because they covered by false colours their sins, so that they were not convinced of anything wrong. They then imputed whatever was evil to their enemies; they did not commonly expostulate with God because he left sins unpunished, but because they received not his aid. We hence see that the Jews here did not clamour and contend with God through hatred of wickedness, but had only a regard to their own advantages; nor did they condemn the sins of others, except those by which they received some harm or loss, and that they considered none wicked except those by whom they were injured. We hence learn that they did not complain through zeal for what was right, but because they would have God bound to them to undertake their cause like earthly patrons.

We indeed know that even the godly are sometimes wearied, and their faith is ready to fail, when things in the world are in a disturbed and confused state: and this was the case with David, as it is recorded in the seventy-third Psalm; but there is in the servants and sincere worshippers of God some concern for what is just and right, whenever they have such grief and trouble of mind, according to the case of Habakkuk, when he said, "How long, O Lord!" (Hab. i. 2;) for no doubt his complaint arose from a right principle, because his desire was that God should be truly served in the world. But there was nothing of this kind in the Jews, with whom our Prophet contends here; for as we have said, there was no hatred of wickedness, but only a care for their own advantage; they hence said, that the ungodly pleased God, because God did not immediately in-

[1] Some have contended that from the order in which the words occur, the rendering ought to be as follows—

Whosoever makes evil good in the eyes of Jehovah,
Even in them he delights. (See Isaiah v. 20.)

The *Septuagint* favour this version, as the word for "good," καλὸν, is in the accusative case. But the usual rendering is the best—

Every doer of evil *is* good (approved) in the eyes of Jehovah,
And in them he delights.

Cocceius observes on these words—"None are so impiously bold as actually to express such words, but Scripture is wont to ascribe to the wicked such expressions as are suitable to their character."—*Ed.*

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terpose when they apprehended some trouble from their enemies.

The repetition is a proof of greater bitterness; for they were not content with one clamorous expression, but added, that God took delight in them.

Then follows the other clause, *or where is the God of judgment?*[1] They seem not here to reason amiss, that is, from the nature of God. Men may change their counsel and their design, and remain men still, for they are subject to inconstancy and fickleness; but to God there belongs no change. There seems not then to be an impropriety in this—that there is no God, except he be the judge of the world; for he cannot divest himself of his office without denying himself. But they malignantly impeached God; nay, they now insinuate that there is none, because he had abdicated his judgment; for they took it as granted, that God had ceased to be the punisher of wickedness, which was most false; but yet they thought that according to facts it was certain and clear. Hence they concluded that there was no God, as his divinity must have been abolished together with his judgment. We hence see to what extent of insolence they burst forth in their complaints, so that they either charged God with injustice, or alleged that his divinity was annihilated. Now follows—

CHAPTER III.

1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

1. Ecce ego mitto Angelum meum, et purgabit viam coram facie mea; et mox veniet ad templum suum Dominus, quem vos quæritis, et Angelus fœderis quem vos expetitis; ecce venit, dicit Iehova exercituum.

Here the Prophet does not bring comfort to the wicked slanderers previously mentioned, but asserts the constancy of his faith in opposition to their blasphemous words; as

[1] "The God of righteousness—*δικαιοσύνης*," is the version of the *Septuagint.—Ed.*

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though he had said, "Though they impiously declare that they have been either deceived or forsaken by the God in whom they had hoped, yet his covenant shall not be in vain." The design of what is announced is like that of the declaration made elsewhere, "Though men are perfidious and false, yet God remains true, and cannot depart from his own nature." (Num. xxiii. 19.) God then does here gloriously triumph over the Jews, and alleges his own covenant in opposition to their disgraceful slanders, because their wicked murmurings could not hinder him to accomplish his promises and to perform in due time what they thought would never be done; and he adopts a demonstrative adverb in order to show the certainty of what is said.

Behold, he says, *I send my messenger*, who will *clear the way before my face*.[1] This passage ought doubtless to be understood of John the Baptist, for Christ himself so explains it, than whom no better interpreter can be found; and since John the Baptist was the messenger of Christ, the beginning of the verse can be applied to no other person. Afterwards the Father himself speaks as we shall see: but as he who appeared in the flesh is the same God with the Father, it is no wonder that he speaks, and then that the words which follow are spoken in the person of the Father.

There is here a striking allusion to Moses, whose office it was to intercede, that God might not in his just wrath destroy the whole people; for as then the majesty of God was more than could be borne without an intercessor, so that the people through fear cried out "Speak thou to us lest we die," (Ex. xx. 19,) so also now does Malachi teach us, that there is need of an intercessor, by whom God's wrath might be mitigated, which the Jews had extremely provoked. This office John the Baptist undertook, who prepared the Jews to hear the voice of Christ.

By saying that he would *send a messenger to clear his way*, he indirectly reproved the Jews, by whom many hinderances were thrown as it were in the way; as though he

[1] As quoted by the Evangelists, it is "before *thy* face." *Jerome's* observation is, that the apostles and evangelists transferred the truth contained in passages without minding syllables and small words.—*Ed.*

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had said, "They prevent by the obstacles they raise up the redemption and the promised salvation to be revealed: there will therefore be the need of a *messenger to clear the way.*" For the Jews had introduced impediments, as though they designedly wished to resist the favour which had been prepared and promised to them. But how the Baptist performed his work by clearing the way, is evident from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, as well as from the Gospels; and hence may be gathered what I have already said—that God by his fidelity and mercy struggled with those obstacles which the Jews had raised up to prevent the coming of Christ.[1]

He afterwards adds, *And presently*[2] *shall come to his temple the Lord, whom ye seek.* After having said that he would open a way for his favour, he now adds, *come shall the Lord.* He introduces here, not Jehovah, but the Lord, אדון, *Adun;* and hence he speaks distinctly of Christ, who is afterwards called the *Angel* or Messenger *of the covenant.* But the word אדון, *Adun,* was commonly used for a Mediator, as in Ps. cx., and also in Dan. ix. 17; where it is expressly said, "Hear, O Jehovah, for the sake of the Lord," למען אדוני, *lamon Aduni;* the word is the same as here, *come* then *shall the Lord.* The reason for this mode of speaking was, be-

[1] The verb פנה, rendered "purgabit" by *Calvin* in the sense of clearing, can hardly bear this meaning. It signifies to turn or look to a thing, and hence to provide or prepare. In this latter sense it occurs in six other places; and is rendered by the *Septuagint* ἑτοιμάζω, as in Gen. xxiv. 31, and Is. xl. 3, though here ἐπιβλέψεται, according to its primary meaning. The version of *Theod.* here is "ἑτοιμαζει—prepares." The idea of *Calvin* may be said to be included; for as *Henderson* justly observes, "The language is borrowed from the custom of sending pioneers before an eastern monarch to cut through rocks and forests, and remove every impediment that might obstruct his course."—*Ed.*

[2] "Εξαίφνης—suddenly," by the *Sept.*, "statim—immediately," by *Jerome,* and by some others, "unexpectedly." The meaning is, according to some, that his coming would be soon after that of John, about six months; or, according to others, unexpectedly, as a light suddenly arising in darkness, without any previous symptom of its appearance.

The literal rendering of these two lines is the following,—

And suddenly shall he come to his temple,
The Lord whom ye are seeking.

The remark of *Henderson* and of others on the ה before "Lord" as being emphatic, is not well founded. It is owing to the relative "whom" which follows, as it is in our language.—*Ed.*

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cause Christ was shown to them under the type which represented him. As then the kingdom of David was a representation of the kingdom of Christ our Lord, it is no wonder that the Prophets designate him by this title, especially those who were the nearest to the time of Christ's manifestation. But he is promised by another title, *the angel* or messenger *of the covenant;* but it means not the same here as in the first clause. He called John the Baptist at the beginning of this verse a messenger, *the messenger* of Jehovah; and now he calls Christ a messenger, but he is the *messenger of the covenant;*[1] for it was necessary that the covenant should be confirmed by him. The title of John the Baptist was then inferior to that of Christ; for though he was God manifested in the flesh, yet this did not prevent him from being God's minister and interpreter in order to confirm his covenant; and we know that the office of Christ consists in confirming and sealing to us the covenant of God, not only by his doctrine, but also by his blood and the sacrifice of his cross.

Malachi then promises here to the Jews both a king and a reconciler,—a king under the title of Lord,—and a reconciler under the title of the messenger of the covenant: and we know it was the main thing in the whole doctrine of the law, that a Redeemer was to come, to reconcile the Church to God and to rule it.

And he says that the Mediator was *sought* and *expected* by the Jews; and through him God was to be propitious to them: but this was not said but ironically. The faithful indeed at this day have all their desires fixed on Christ, after he has been revealed in the flesh, until they shall partake at his last coming of the fruit of his death and resurrection; and under the law we know that the groanings and the sighings of the godly were towards Christ: but Malachi here, by way of contempt, checks these unreasonable charges, by which the Jews accused God, as though he had disappointed their hope and their prayers. For we have said, and the fact is evident, that God had been presumptu-

[1] "A phrase nowhere else in Scripture."—*Secker.*

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ously and shamefully impeached by them, as though he meant not to fulfil his promises: hence the Prophet says ironically, and sharply too, that Christ was expected by the Jews, for they murmured, because God had too long deferred his coming: "O! where is the Redeemer? when will he be revealed to us?" Since then they thus pretended that they earnestly expected the coming of Christ, the Prophet upbraids them with this, and justly too, for they had expressly manifested their unbelief.

Behold, he comes, saith Jehovah of hosts.[1] Here he introduces the Father as the speaker, as it has been already stated; and the particle הִנֵּה, *ene*, behold, is used for the sake of removing every doubt; and then he confirms what he says by the authority of God. He might have asserted this in his own person as a teacher; but in order to produce an effect on the Jews by the majesty of God, he makes him the author of this prophecy. It follows—

2. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.	2. Et quis sustinebit diem adventus ejus? et quis consistet in apparitione ejus? quia ipse quasi ignis purgans, et quasi borith (*vel*, herba) fullonum.

The Prophet in this verse contends more sharply with the Jews, and shows that it was a mere pretence that they so much expected the coming of the Mediator, for they were far different from him through the whole course of their life. And when he says that the coming of Christ would be in-

[1] Owing to this repetition, some of the fathers, *Theodoret*, *Eusebius*, and *Augustine*, held that this part refers to Christ's second coming: but the repetition is only to confirm what had been previously said, and according to the usual manner of the Prophets, contains an expansion of the former idea. A literal rendering of the whole verse would exhibit this as the real meaning,—

Behold I send my messenger,
And he shall prepare the way before me:
And suddenly shall he come to his temple,
The Lord whom ye are seeking;
Yea, the angel of the covenant, in whom ye delight,
Behold, he is coming, saith Jehovah of hosts.

The four last lines exhibit an example of parallelism which often occurs. The first and the last line correspond, and so do the second and the third. —*Ed.*

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tolerable, what is said is to be confined to the ungodly; for we know that nothing is more delightful and sweeter to us than when Christ is nigh us: though now we are pilgrims and at a distance from him, yet his invisible presence is our chief joy and happiness. (Rom. viii. 22, 23.) Besides, were not the expectation of his coming to sustain our minds, how miserable would be our condition? It is therefore by this mark that the faithful are to be distinguished,—that they expect his coming; and Paul does not in vain exhort us, by the example of heaven and earth, to be like those in travail, until Christ appears to us as our Redeemer.

But the Prophet here directs his discourse to the ungodly, who though they seem to burn with desire for God's presence, do not yet wish him to be nigh them, but they flee from him as much as they can. We have met with a similar passage in Amos, "Wo to those who desire the day of the Lord! What will it be to you? for it will be darkness, yea darkness and not light, a day of sorrow and not of joy." (Amos v. 18.) Amos in this passage spoke on the same subject; for the Jews, inflated with false confidence, thought that God could not forsake them, as he had pledged his faith to them; but he reminded them that God had been so provoked by their sins, that he was become their professed and sworn enemy. So also in this place, *Come*, the Prophet says, *come shall the Redeemer;* but this will avail you nothing; on the contrary, his coming will be dreadful to you. We indeed know that Christ appeared not for salvation to all, but only to the remnant, and to those of Jacob who repented, according to what Isaiah says. (Isaiah x. 21, 22.) But since they obstinately rejected the favour of God, it is no wonder that the Prophet excluded them from the blessings of the Redeemer.

Who then *will endure his coming?*[1] *and who shall stand at his appearance?* as though he had said, "In vain do ye flatter yourselves, and even upbraid God, that he retains the

[1] For "who will endure," the *Vulgate*, after *Jerome*, has, "quis poterit cogitare—who can think of?" &c. But this is inconsistent with the *Sept.* and the *Targum*, and with the context. The verb indeed is capable of being derived from כלל as well as from יכל; but the latter is the meaning alone suitable to this passage.—*Ed.*

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promised Redeemer as it were hidden in his own bosom; for he will come in due time, but without any advantage to you; nor will it be given you to enjoy his favour; but on the contrary he will bring to you nothing but terrors; for *he will be like a purifying fire, and as the herb of the fullers.*[1] The latter clause may be taken in a good or a bad sense, as it is evident from the next verse. The power of the fire, we know, is twofold; for it burns and it purifies; it burns what is corrupt; but it purifies gold and silver from their dross. The Prophet no doubt meant to include both, for in the next verse he says, that Christ will be as fire to purify and to refine the sons of Levi as gold and silver. With regard then to the people of whom he has been hitherto speaking, he shows that Christ will be like fire, to burn and consume their filth; for though they boasted with their mouth of their religion, yet we know that the Church of God had many defilements and pollutions; they were therefore to perish by fire. But Malachi teaches us at the same time, that the whole Church was not to perish, for the Lord would *purify the sons of Levi.*

There is here a part stated for the whole; for the promise belongs to the whole Church. The sons of Levi were the first-fruits, and the whole people were in the name of that tribe consecrated to God. This is the reason why he mentions the sons of Levi rather than the whole people; as though he had said, that though the Church was corrupt and polluted, there would yet be a residue which God would save, having purified them. The words which I had omitted are these—

[1] The version of the *Sept.* is "ὡς πυρ χωνευτηρίου καὶ ὡς ποὰ πλυνόντων—as the fire of the crucible (or, of the furnace) and as the herb of the washers." The word, מצרף, may be either a participle or a noun—the refiner or the place or instrument of refining. See Prov. xvii. 3; xxvii. 21. The latter sense is most suitable to this place. "Herb" is rendered "smegma—soap," by *Piscator*,—"Lanaria-cudwort," by *Drusius*,—and "alkaline salt," by *Michaelis*. It was probably the salt-wort mentioned by an author quoted by *Parkhurst*, a plant very common in Judea. It was burned, and water was poured on its ashes. This water became impregnated with strong lixivial salt, "proper for taking," he says, "stains and impurities out of wool or cloth." It is not supposed that what we call "soap" was known to the Jews.—*Ed.*

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3. And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

3. Et sedebit purgans et mundans argentum; et mundabit filios Levi, fundetque (*vel*, conflabit) eos sicut aurum et sicut argentum; et erunt offerentes Iehovæ oblationem in justitia.

The Prophet says, that Christ would *sit to purify the sons of Levi;* for though they were the flower, as it were, and the purity of the Church, they had yet contracted some contagion from the corruption which prevailed. Such then was the contagion, that not only the common people became corrupt, but even the Levites themselves, who ought to have been guides to others, and who were to be in the Church as it were the pattern of holiness. God however promises that such would be the purifying which Christ would effect, and so regulated, that it would consume the whole people, and yet purify the elect, and purify them like silver, that they may be saved. He tells us afterwards that the Levites themselves would need a trial to cleanse them; for they themselves would not be without filth, because they had mixed with a perverse people, who had wholly departed from the law, and from the fear and the worship of God.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are by nature so prone to rash judgment, we may learn to submit to thee, and so quietly to acquiesce in thy judgments, that we may patiently bear whatever chastisements thou mayest daily allot to us, and not doubt but that all is done for our wellbeing, and never murmur against thee, but give thee the glory in all our adversities; and may we so labour to mortify our flesh, that by denying ourselves we may ever avow thee to be the only true God, and a just avenger, and our Father, and that thus renouncing ourselves, we may yet never depart from the purity of thy word, and be thus retained under thy yoke, until we shall at length attain that liberty which has been procured for us by thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-eighth.

In our last lecture the Prophet delineated the office of Christ, that hypocrites might know that they in vain complained of the tardiness of God, as though he had deserted them at the very time of their extremity. He further said, that there was need of purifying, not only as to the people, but as to the priests also; and hence it appears how corrupt the state of things had become among all classes. At the same time he seems indirectly to reprove hypocrisy, not only in the common people, but also in the Levites, for there is a contrast to be understood between the sacrifices they then offered, and those offered by their fathers.

By saying then that they would *offer to Jehovah an oblation in righteousness*, מנחה בצדקה, *meneche betsadke*, he intimates that their sacrifices had not been legitimate, for they had become polluted, and hence could not rightly minister to God. We hence see that the Levites are here reproved because they had polluted God's service in not offering the right sacrifices such as he had prescribed in his law. This is not to be applied to the outward acts only, but also to the feelings and motives, because they did come to God's altars with minds well prepared.

To offer in righteousness is a mode of speaking common in Hebrew, and means to offer in a right way, so that there should be nothing wrong or worthy of blame. By the verb ישב, *isheb*, to sit, is intimated continuance; as though the Prophet had said, that corruption was so deeply fixed in the Levites that it could not in one day or by light means be purged away: in short, he meant by this one word to exaggerate the corrupt state of the people, for had only a slight washing been sufficient, he would have simply said, "he will purify, he will cleanse, he will cast," or melt,[1] for

[1] "Fundet *vel* conflabit," so he renders צרף, which signifies to fuse, as given by the *Septuagint*, χωνεύω. It properly means to strain off or separate, that is, wine from its lees, as in Is. xxv. 6; or, as here, the pure metal from its dross. It intimates such a process as is successful in separating the gold and silver from the base matter that may adhere to them. So that the "expurgans—cleansing" of *Piscator*, or the "defæcans—defe-

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he uses these three words: but he says, as I have stated, that he will *sit* to do these things, in order to show that he would continue in his work and carry it on for a long time, because the diseases being so inveterate they could not be easily healed. We now understand what the Prophet means. He afterwards adds—

4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.	4. Et grata erit Iehovæ oblatio Iehudah et Ierusalem, sicut à diebus antiquis et sicut annis pristinis.

This verse shows, that though he had just spoken of the sons of Levi, he yet had regard to the whole people. But he meant to confine to the elect what ought not to have been extended to all, for there were among the people, as we have seen and shall again presently see, many who were reprobates, nay, the greater part had fallen away; and this is the reason why the Prophet especially addresses the few remaining who had not fallen away.

But he names *Judah and Jerusalem*, for that tribe had returned to their own country, and sacrifices were offered at Jerusalem, though not with the splendour of ancient times, the state of things having become much deteriorated among those miserable exiles. Hence the Prophet, that he might encourage the faithful, says, that though the temple was then mean, and the worship of God as then performed was unadorned and abject, yet there was no reason for the Levites

cating or fining from dregs," of *Junius* and *Tremelius*, very nearly expresses the idea. *Newcome* and *Henderson* translate this verb "refine," as they do another verb, or rather participle, at the beginning of the verse. "He will strain them, (*colabit,*)" is the version of *Jerome*. Our version has "purge," but "cleanse" is better. "Defecate" comes nearest to the original word. I would offer the following version—

3. And sit will the fuser and purifier of silver;
And he will purify the sons of Levi,
And draw off their dross as that of silver and gold;
And they shall be to Jehovah
The offerers of oblation in righteousness.

The paraphrase of *Dathius* is substantially faithful—

As the gold-finer (or goldsmith—*aurifaber*) and the purifier of silver sits, so he will purify the posterity of Levi, and will clarify (*eliquabit*) them as gold and silver, that they may rightly offer gifts to Jehovah.—*Ed.*

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or for others to despond, because the Lord would again restore the glory of his temple, and really show that what men viewed with scorn was approved by him. It follows—

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

5. Et appropinquabo ad vos in judicium, et ero testis velox contra præstigiatores, (*vel*, divinos,) et adulteros, et jurantes ad fallendum, et supprimentes mercedem mercenarii, viduæ, et pupilli, (*aut*, viduam et pupillum,) et pervertentes peregrinum, et qui non timuerunt me, dicit Iehova.

Here the Prophet retorts the complaints which the Jews had previously made. There is here then a counter-movement when he says, *I will draw nigh to you;* for they provoked God by this slander—that he hid himself from them and looked at a distance on what was taking place in the world, as though the people he had chosen were not the objects of his care. They expected God to be to them like a hired soldier, ready at hand to help them in any adversity, and to come armed at their nod or pleasure to fight with their enemies: this they expected; but God declares what is of a contrary character,—that he would come for *judgment;* and he alludes to that impious slander, when they denied that he was the God of judgment, because he did not immediately, or soon enough, resist their enemies: "Oh! God has now divested himself of his own nature! for his judgment does not appear." His answer is, "I will not forget my judgment when I come to you, but I shall come in a way contrary to what you expect." They indeed wished God to put on arms for their advantage, but God declares, that he would be an enemy to them, according to what he also says by the mouth of Isaiah.

He further says, *I will be a swift witness.* He sets swiftness here in opposition to their calumny, for they said that God was slow and tardy, because he had not immediately, as they had wished, come forth to exercise vengeance on foreign nations: he, on the other hand, says, that he would be sufficiently swift when the time came.

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And as there are the like blasphemies prevailing in the world at this day, this passage may be accommodated to our circumstances. Let us then know, that though God may delay and connive at things for a time, he yet knows his own opportunities, so as to appear as the avenger of wickedness as soon as it will be necessary. But let us ever fear lest our haste should prove our ruin, for he has no respect of persons, so as to favour our unfaithfulness and to be rigid towards those who are hostile to us. Let us take heed that while we look for the presence of God, we present ourselves before his tribunal with a pure and upright conscience.

He then mentions several kinds of evils, in which he includes the sins in which the Jews implicated themselves. He first names *diviners* or sorcerers. It is indeed true, that among various kinds of superstitions this was one; but as the word is found here by itself, the Prophet no doubt meant to include all kinds of diviners, soothsayers, false prophets, and all such deceivers: and so there is here again another instance of stating a part for the whole; for he includes all those corruptions which are contrary to the true worship of God. We indeed know that God formerly had by his word put a restraint on the Jews, that they were not to turn aside to incantations and magical arts, or to anything of this kind; but he intimates here, that they were then so given up to gross abominations, that they abandoned themselves to magic arts, and to incantations, and the juggleries of the devil. He mentions, in the second place, *adulterers*, and under this term he includes all kinds of lewdness; and, in the third place, he names *frauds*[1] and *rapines;* and if we rightly consider the subject, we shall find that these three things contain whatever violates the whole law.

The design of the Prophet is by no means ambiguous; for he intended to show how perversely they expostulated with God; for they ought to have been destroyed a hundred times, inasmuch as they were apostates, were given to obscene lusts, were cruel, avaricious, and perfidious.

[1] Jurantes ad fallandum—swear to deceive: the original literally is, "who swear to a lie," or to a falsehood.—*Ed.*

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And this reproof ought to be a warning to us in the present day, that we may not call forth God's judgment on others, while we flatter ourselves as being innocent. Whenever then we flee to God for help, and ask him to succour us, let us remember that he is a just judge who has no respect of persons. Let then every one, who implores God's judgment, be his own judge, and anticipate the correction which he has reason to fear. That God therefore may not be armed for our destruction, let us carefully examine our own life, and follow the rule prescribed here by the Prophet; let us begin with the worship of God, then let us come to fornications and adulteries, and whatever is contrary to a chaste conduct, and afterwards let us pass to frauds and plunder; for if we are free from all superstition, if we keep ourselves chaste and pure, and if we also abstain from all plunders and all cruelty, our life is doubtless approved by God. And hence it is that the Prophet adds at the end of the verse, *They feared not me;* for when lusts, and plunder, and frauds, and the corruptions which vitiate God's worship, prevail, it is evident that there is no fear of God, but that men, having shaken off the yoke, as it were run mad, though they may a thousand times profess the name of God.

By mentioning the *orphan*, *the widow*, and *the stranger*, he amplifies the atrocity of their crimes; for the orphans, widows, and strangers, we know, are under the guardianship and protection of God, inasmuch as they are exposed to the wrongs of men. Hence every one who plunders orphans, or harasses widows, or oppresses strangers, seems to carry on open war, as it were, with God himself, who has promised that these should be safe under the shadow of his hand. With regard to the expressions, it seems not suitable to say that the hire of the widow and of the orphan is suppressed; there may therefore be an inversion of the words[1]—they

[1] There is no need of this inversion, if we render the word עשק, defraud, or rob, or deal wrongfully with, which is no doubt its secondary meaning,—

And against the robbers of the hireling's hire,
Of the widow, and of the fatherless,
And those who oppress the stranger,
And fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts.

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oppressed the widows, the orphans, and strangers. It follows—

6. For I *am* the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.	6. Quia ego Iehova, non muto (*alii vertunt*, non mutor, *et ad rem ipsam parum interest;*) et vos filii Iacob non estis consumpti.

Here the Prophet more clearly reproves and checks the impious waywardness of the people; for God, after having said that he would come and send a Redeemer, though not such as would satisfy the Jews, now claims to himself what justly belongs to him, and says that he changes not, because he is God. Under the name Jehovah, God reasons from his own nature; for he sets himself, as we have observed in our last lecture, in opposition to mortals; nor is it a wonder that God here disclaims all inconsistency, since the impostor Balaam was constrained to celebrate God's immutable constancy—"For he is not God," he says, "who changes," or varies, "like man." (Num. xxiii. 19.) We now then understand the force of the words, *I am Jehovah.* But he adds as an explanation, *I change not*, or, I am not changed; for if we do not take the verb actively, the meaning is the same,—that God continues in his purpose, and is not turned here and there like men who repent of a purpose they have formed, because what they had not thought of comes to their mind, or because they wish undone what they have performed, and seek new ways by which they may retrace their steps. God denies that anything of this kind can take place in him, for he is *Jehovah*, and *changes not*, or is not changed.

The latter clause is variously explained. The verb כָּלָה, *cale*, means, in the first conjugation, to be consumed; but in *Piel*, to complete, or to make an end; and this sense would be very suitable; but a grammatical reason interferes, for it is in the first conjugation. Did grammar allow, this meaning would be appropriate, "Ye children of Israel have

The *Septuagint* give the meaning of the word as above, ἀποστερούντας,—defrauders, robbers, and supply "tyrannizers—καταδυναστεύοντας," before "widow."—*Ed.*

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not made an end:" Why? "From the days of your fathers," &c.: then the verse which follows would be connected with this. But we must be content with the present reading; and a twofold view may be taken of it: the copulative ו, *vau*, may be taken as an adversative, "Though ye are not consumed, I yet am not changed:" as though it was said, "Think not that you have escaped, though I have long spared you and your sins: though then ye are not yet consumed, as I have borne with you in your great wickedness, I yet continue to be Jehovah, nor do I change my nature, and ye shall at length find that I am a just Judge; though I shall not soon execute my vengeance, punishment being held suspended, or as it were buried, yet the end will show that I am not changed."[1]

But the Prophet seems rather to accuse the Jews of ingratitude in charging God with cruelty or with negligence, because he did not immediately assist them; and at the same time they did not consider within themselves that they remained alive because God had a reason derived from his own nature for sparing them, and for not rendering to them what they had deserved. The meaning then is this, "I am God, and I change not; and ought ye not to have acknowledged that wonderful forbearance through which I have spared you? for how has it been that you have not perished, and that innumerable deaths have not swallowed you up? How is it that you are yet alive? Is it because you have dealt faithfully with me, so that it behoved me to exercise care over you? Nay, it is indeed a wonder that I had not fulminated against you so as to destroy you long ago." We hence see that he upbraids them with ingratitude for accusing him, because he did not immediately come forth in their defence: for he answers then and says, that had he been

[1] The words may be so rendered as to allow the copulative ו its ordinary meaning. The verse contains two announcements bearing on the subject in hand,—

For I *am* Jehovah, I have not changed;
And ye *are* the house of Jacob, ye have not been consumed.

This, I conceive, is the natural rendering of the original. God was not changed, because he was Jehovah; and they were not consumed, because they were the house of Jacob, a people in covenant with God.—*Ed.*

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rigid and vehement in his displeasure, they could not have continued, for they had not ceased for many successive ages to seek their own ruin, as we find in what follows, for he says—

7. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

7. A diebus patrum vestrorum declinastis à statutis meis (*vel*, edictis,) et non servastis: Revertimini ad me, et revertar ad vos, dicit Iehova exercituum; et dixistis, In quo revertemur?

8. Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

8. An diripiet homo Deum (*vel*, deos, *vel*, Iudices,) quia vos diripuistis me? et dixistis, In quo diripuimus te (*vel*, expilavimus)? In decimis et oblationibus.

The Prophet expands more fully what he had referred to —that it was a wonder that the Jews had not perished, because they had never ceased to provoke God against themselves. He then sets this fact before them more clearly, *From the days*[1] *of your fathers*, he says, *ye have turned aside from my statutes*. He increases their condemnation by this circumstance—that they had not lately begun to depart from the right way, but had continued their contumacy for many ages, according to what the apostles, as well as the Prophets in various places, have testified: "Ye uncircumcised in heart, ye have ceased not to resist the Holy Spirit like your fathers." (Acts vii. 51.) "Harden not your hearts as your fathers did; in the righteousness of your fathers walk not." (Ps. xcv. 8.) But I will not multiply proofs, which very often are to be met with, and must be well known.

We now understand the Prophet's intention—that the Jews for many ages had been notorious for their impiety and wickedness, and that they had not been dealt with by God as they had deserved, because he had according to his inef-

[1] The words are singular, "days" being preceded by two prepositions, ל and מ, לִמִימֵי, "to—from the days," &c., which seems to mean, "To this time from the days of your fathers;" or it may mean, "To and from the days of your fathers, your immediate predecessors."—*Ed.*

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fable goodness and forbearance suspended his rigour, so as not to visit them according to their demerits. It hence appears how unreasonable they were, not only in being morose and proud, but especially in being furious against God, when they accused him of tardiness, while yet he had proved himself to be really a God towards them by his continued forbearance.

The words, *And ye have not kept them*, are added for amplification; for he expresses more fully their contempt of his law, as though he had said, that they were not only transgressors, but had also with gross wilfulness so departed from the law as to regard it as nothing to tread God's precepts under their feet.

He then exhorts them to repentance, and kindly addresses them, and declares that he would be propitious and reconcileable to them, if they repented. He has hitherto sharply reproved them, because their necks being hard they had need of such correction; for had the Prophet gently and kindly exhorted them, they would either have kicked or have set on him with their horns; he now mitigates his sharpness, not indeed with respect to all, but if there were any healable among the people he meant to try them; and hence he offers them reconciliation with God, as though he had said, "Though God has been in various ways wantonly offended by you, and though you have repudiated his favour, and have become wholly unworthy of being regarded by him, yet return, and he will meet you."

We have said elsewhere that all exhortations would be in vain without a hope of pardon; for when God commands us to return to the right way, our hearts would never be touched, nay, they would on the contrary turn away, had we no hope that he would be reconciled to us. This course the Prophet now pursues, when in the person of God himself he promises pardon, provided the Jews repented.

God is said to *return* to us, when he ceases to demand the punishment of our sins, and when he lays aside the character of a judge, and makes himself known to us as a Father. We indeed know that God neither returns nor departs; for he who fills all places never moves here and there; and we also

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know that we exist and live in him, but he shows by outward evidences that he is alienated from us, and by the same he shows that he is propitious to us; for when he favours us with fruitful seasons, with peace and with other blessings, he is said to be near us; but when he lets loose the reins of his wrath, or exposes us to the assaults of Satan and to the wanton power of men, he is said to be far removed from us. But this is so well known that I need not dwell longer on the point.

The promise which the Prophet states serves to show, that God would manifest tokens of his paternal favour to the Jews, provided only they were submissive; but that it would be their own fault, if they did not find through his blessings that he was their Father; it would be on account of their sins, which, as Isaiah says, hinder the course of that beneficence to which he is of his own self inclined, (Is. lix. 2.) And he bids them to *return*. Hence the Papists very foolishly conclude, that repentance is in the power of man's free-will. But God requires what is above our strength; and yet there is no reason why we should complain that there is a too heavy burden laid on us; for he regards not what we can, or what our ability admits, but what we owe to him and what our duty requires. Though then no one can of his own self turn to God, he is not on this account excusable, because we must consider whence comes the defect; and how much soever, as I have already said, a man may pretend his own impotency, he cannot yet escape from being bound to God, though more is required of him than he of himself can perform. But this subject has often been discussed elsewhere. The import of what is said here is,—that men are not miserable through the unjust rigour of God, but always through their own sins.

It follows, *Ye have said, In what shall we return?* It is an evidence of perverseness, when men answer that they see not that they have erred, and that hence conversion is to no purpose required of them; for this is the meaning of these words, *Whereby shall we return?* that is, "What dost thou require from us? for we are not conscious of any defection; we worship God as we ought: now if our duties are

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repudiated by him, we see not why he should so expressly blame us; let him show in what we have offended; for conversion to him is superfluous, until we be proved guilty of apostacy, or of those sins which God determines to punish in us." To this the Prophet answers—

Will a man defraud the gods? Some give this version, "Will a man defraud God?" But it is strained and remote from the Prophet's design; and they pervert the meaning. For I do not see what can be elicited from this rendering, "Will a man defraud God?" But there are other two meanings which may be taken. The first is, "Will a man defraud his gods?" The word אלהים, *Aleim*, though it be in the plural number, is applied, as it is well known, to the true God; but it is applied also to idols; and in this place the Prophet seems to me to compare the Jews to the Gentiles, that their impiety might be made more evident. The same is the object of Jeremiah, when he says, "Go, and survey the islands, is there a nation which has changed its gods, while yet they are no gods." (Jer. ii. 10.) Since their blindness and obstinacy held fast the Gentiles in darkness, that they continued to worship the gods to whom they had been accustomed, it was an abominable wickedness in the Jews, that having been taught to worship the true God, they were yet continually influenced by ungodly levity, and sought new modes of worship, as though they wished to devise another god for themselves. So also in this place the Prophet seems to bring forward the Gentiles as an example to the Jews; for they discharged their duty towards their gods; but the Jews despised the supreme and the only true God: "Behold," he says, "go round the world, and ye shall not find among the nations so unbridled a liberty as prevails among you; for they render obedience to their gods, and sacrilege is abominable to them; but ye defraud me. Am I inferior to idols? or is my state worse than theirs?"

Some take the word אלהים, *Aleim*, for judges, as judges are sometimes so called; but this meaning seems not suitable on account of the word, Adam. As then this word generally means man, the Prophet, I have no doubt, intimates what I have stated,—that unbelievers, though sunk

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in darkness, are yet restrained by reverence and fear from changing their deity, and that they dare not to show levity when the name only of their god is pronounced. Since then such humility prevailed among unbelievers, could the impiety of that people, who had been trained up in the law, be excusable? a people too, upon whom God had ever made the doctrine of the law to shine.[1]

He afterwards adds, *Because ye have defrauded me; and ye have said, Whereby have we defrauded thee? In tenths and in oblations.*[2] Here the Prophet again proves the people guilty of perverseness: it was indeed hypocrisy, and though gross, it was yet surpassed by impudence; for they asked, whereby they had defrauded God? and yet this was evident even to children: for we know, and we have seen elsewhere, that avarice so ruled among them, that every one, bent on their own profit, neglected the temple and the priests. Since then they were openly sacrilegious, how shameless they must have been to ask whereby they had defrauded God? The thing itself was indeed manifest and commonly known, so that children could see it. God however deemed it enough to convict them by one sentence,—that they defrauded him in the tenths and in the first-fruits; not that any advantage accrued to him from oblations, as he had no need of any such things; but he rightly calls and counts that his own which he had appointed for his own service. Since then he had instituted that order among the Jews, that they might by the tenths support the priests, and a part also was required for the poor, since God designed the first-fruits and other things to be offered to him, that men might thereby be continually reminded, that all things were his,

[1] Most differ from *Calvin* as to the word אלהים in this passage. The *Sept.* render it "God—Θεὸν," the Targum, "judges," but commentators generally "God," *i.e.*, the true God, supposing the audacity of the people to be here reprobated. The word for "defraud or rob," is only found here and in Prov. xxii. 23, and rendered "supplant" by the *Sept.*, but "rob—ἁρπάσητε," by *Aq.* and *Sym.*, the only meaning consistent with the context.—*Ed.*

[2] Literally it is, "in the tenth (or, tithe) and the heave-offering." The last word comes from רם, to raise or lift up, because this offering was raised or heaved, and thus presented as it were to the Lord. See Exod. xxix. 27, 28. It is rendered "first-fruits" by the *Sept.*

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and that whatever they received from his hand was sacred to him, he had previously called the bread laid on the table his own, and had called the sacrifices his own food, as though he did eat and drink. But as I have already said, we ought to regard the object in view, because his will was to be thus worshipped, and at the same time to keep as his own whatever belonged to his service. This then is the reason why he now complains of being defrauded of the tenths.

But we know that other sacrifices are now prescribed to us; and after prayer and praises, he bids us to relieve the poor and needy. God then, no doubt, is deprived by us of his right, when we are unkind to the poor, and refuse them aid in their necessity. We indeed thereby wrong men, and are cruel; but our crime is still more heinous, inasmuch as we are unfaithful stewards; for God deals more liberally with us than with others, for this end—that some portion of our abundance may come to the poor; and as he consecrates to their use what we abound in, we become guilty of sacrilege whenever we give not to our brethren what God commands us; for we know that he engages to repay, according to what is said in Prov. xix. 17, "He who gives to the poor lends to God."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased to choose us as priests to thyself, not that we may offer beasts to thee, but consecrate to thee ourselves, and all that we have,—O grant, that we may with all readiness strive to depart from every kind of uncleanness, and to purify ourselves from all defilements, so that we may duly perform the sacred office of priesthood, and thus conduct ourselves towards thee with chasteness and purity; may we also abstain from every evil work, from all fraud and all cruelty towards our brethren, and so to deal with one another as to prove through our whole life that thou art really our Father, ruling us by thy Spirit, and that true and holy brotherhood exists between us; and may we live justly towards one another, so as to render to each his own right, and thus show that we are members of thy only-begotten Son, so as to be owned by him when he shall appear for the redemption of his people, and shall gather us into his celestial kingdom.—Amen.

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Lecture One Hundred and Seventy-ninth.

9. Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

9. Maledictione vos maledicti estis, et me vos diripuistis tota gens.

MALACHI pursues the same subject; for he answers the Jews in the name of God—that they unjustly complained of his rigour as being immoderate, since they themselves were the cause of all their evils. He says that they were cursed, but he adds that this happened to them deservedly, as though he had said—"Be that granted what you say, (for lamentations were continually made,) why is it that God afflicts us without end or limits?" God seems to grant what they were wont reproachfully to declare; but he says in answer to this —"*But ye have defrauded me;* what wonder then that my curse consumes you? As then I have been robbed by you, as far as ye could, I will render to you your just recompense; for it is not right that I should be bountiful and kind to you, while ye thus defraud me, and take from me what is my own."

The meaning then is this—that it was indeed true that the Jews lamented that they were under a curse, but that the cause ought to have been searched out. They indeed wished their rapines and sacrileges to be forgiven, by which they defrauded God; but God declares that he punished them justly in consuming them with poverty and want, since they so sparingly rendered to him what they owed.

He mentions *the whole nation*,[1] and thus aggravates the wickedness of the Jews; for not a few were guilty of the sacrilege mentioned, but all, from the least to the greatest, they all plundered the tenths and the oblations. It hence follows that God's vengeance did not exceed due limits, since there was as it were a common conspiracy; there were not ten or a hundred implicated in this sin, but, as he says, the whole people. It follows—

10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be

10. Adducite omnes decimas (*vel*, totas) ad domum thesauri (*vel*, ad re-

[1] The words are expressive, for literally they are—
And me have ye robbed, the nation, the whole of it.—*Ed.*

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meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall* not *be room* enough *to receive it.*

positorium,) et sit cibus in domo mea; et probate me nunc in hoc, dicit Iehova exercituum, annon aperiam vobis fenestras cœlorum, depromam vobis benedictionem, ut non sit sufficientia (*vel*, ut non sit modus sufficientiæ.)

He at length declares that they profited nothing by contending with God, but that a better way was open to them, that is, to return into favour with him. After having then repelled their unjust accusations, he again points out the remedy which he had already referred to—that if they dealt faithfully with God, he would be bountiful to them, and that his blessing would be promptly extended to them. This is the sum of the passage. They had been sufficiently proved guilty of rapacity in withholding the tenths and the oblations; as then the sacrilege was well known, the Prophet now passes judgment, as they say, according to what is usually done when the criminal is condemned, and the cause is decided, so that he who has been defrauded recovers his right.

So also now God deals with the Jews. *Bring*, he says, to *the repository*[1] (for this is the same as the house of the treasury, or of provisions) *all the tenths*, or the whole tenths. We hence learn that they had not withholden the whole of the tenths from the priests, but that they fraudulently brought the half, or retained as much as they could; for it was not without reason that he said, *Bring all*, or the whole. They then so paid the tenths as to supply the priests with a part only, and thus they trifled with God, according to what hypocrites do, who ever claim to themselves high honour, and try to perform their duty in such a way as not to discover their own perfidy, and yet they are not ashamed of the liberty they take to illude God; and of this we have here a re-

[1] The literal rendering is—

Bring ye the whole of the tenth
Into the house, the treasury,
And let the prey be in my house.

That is—"Let what you rob me of, the prey, or plunder, be in my house." The word is טרף, properly prey, or plunder, and so rendered by the *Septuagint*, "διαρπαγὴ—plunder." It was the *Targum* that gave a wrong meaning to the word, which most have followed.—*Ed.*

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markable example. We then see that it is no new or unusual thing for men to pretend to do the duties they owe to God, and at the same time to take away from him what is his own, and to transfer it to themselves, and that manifestly, so that their impiety is evident, though it be covered by the veil of dissimulation.

He then adds, *Let there be meat in my house.* We have elsewhere explained this form of speaking, and in the last lecture the Prophet spoke also of the meat of God, not that God needs meat and drink, but that whatever he has given us ought to be deemed his. We have already stated, that it has been recorded for our sake, that the Jews offered bread, and victims, and things of this kind, and that they feasted at Jerusalem in the presence of God: for what is more desirable than that God should dwell in the midst of us? and this is often repeated in the law. But this could not have been set forth to us in a way so familiar, as when God is represented as in a manner sitting at table with us, as though he were our guest, eating of the same bread and of the other provisions: and hence it is said in the law, "Thou shalt feast and rejoice before thy God." (Deut. ii. 18.) Now as God needs not meat and drink, as it has been said, and as men in their grossness are ever prone to superstitions, he substituted the priests and the poor in his own place, to prevent the Jews from entertaining earthly notions respecting him. And this kind of modification or correction deserves to be noticed: for the Lord on the one hand intended to draw men in a kind manner to himself; but, on the other hand, he proposed to raise their minds upward to heaven, lest they should ascribe to him anything unworthy of himself, as is wont to be done, and is very common.

But, at the same time, he again accuses them of sacrilege, for he complains that he was deprived of meat; *Let there* then *be meat in my house; and prove me by this, saith Jehovah, if I will not open,* &c. He confirms what he said before, and yet proceeds with his promise, for by subjecting himself to a proof, he boldly repels their calumny in saying that they were without cause consumed with want, and that God had changed his nature, because he had not given a

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large supply of provisions. God then briefly shows, that wrong had been done to him, for he admits of a proof or a trial, as though he had said, "If you choose to contest the point, I will soon settle it, for if you bring to me the tenths and them entire, there will immediately come to you a great abundance of all provisions: it will hence be evident, that I am not the cause of barrenness, but that it is your wickedness, because ye have sacrilegiously defrauded me."

Then he adds, *If I will not open to you the windows of heaven.* It is the first thing as to fertility that the heavens should water the earth, according to what Scripture declares: and hence God threatens in the law that the heaven would be iron and the earth brass, (Deut. xxviii. 23,) for there is a mutual connection between the heaven and the earth, and he says elsewhere by a Prophet, "The heaven will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the corn and wine, and the corn and wine will hear men." (Hos. ii. 22.) For when famine urges us, we cry for bread and wine, as our life seems in a manner to be dependent on these supplies. When there is no wine nor corn, we meet with a denial; but the wine and the corn cry to the earth, and why? because according to the order fixed by God, they seek as it were to break forth; for when the bowels of the earth are closed, neither the corn nor the vine can come forth, and then they in vain call on the earth. The same is the case with the earth; for when it is dry and as it were famished, it calls on the heavens, but if rain be denied, the heavens seem to reject its prayer. Then God in this place shows that the earth could not produce a single ear of corn, except the heavens supplied moisture or rain. God indeed could from the beginning have watered the earth without rain, as Moses relates he did at first, for a vapour then supplied the want of rain. Though then rain descends naturally, we are yet reminded here that God sends it. This is the first thing.

But as rain itself would not suffice, he adds, *I will unsheath*, &c.; for רק, *rek*, means properly to unsheath; but as this metaphor seems unnatural, some have more correctly rendered it, "I will draw out." Unnatural also is this version, "I will empty out a blessing," and it perverts the

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meaning. Let us then follow what I have stated as the first —that a blessing is drawn out from God when the earth discharges its office, and becomes fertile or fruitful.[1] We hence see that God is not only in one way bountiful to us, but he also intends by various processes to render us sensible of his kindness: he rains from heaven to soften the earth, that it may in its bosom nourish the corn, and then send it forth from its bowels, as though it extended its breast to us; and further, God adds his blessing, so as to render the rain useful.

He subjoins the words עַד־בְּלִי־דָי, *od-beli-di*, which some render, "that there may not be a sufficiency," that is, that granaries and cellars might not be capable of containing such abundance. They then elicit this meaning—that so great would be the fruitfulness of the earth, and so large would be its produce, that their repositories would not be sufficiently capacious. But others give this version, "Beyond the measure of sufficiency." The word דַי, *di*, means properly sufficiency, or what is needful, as by inverting the letters it is יָד, *id*.[2] With regard to the general meaning there is but little difference. Suitable also is this version, "Beyond sufficiency;" that is, I will not regard what is needful for you, as though it were measured, but the abundance shall be overflowing. It follows—

11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the

11. Et increpabo vobis devorantem, et non corrumpet

[1] The verb in Hiphil, as it is here, is applied to the drawing forth of a sword or lance, Ex. xv. 9, and to the drawing out of an army for battle, Gen. xiv. 14. It is rendered, "ἐκχεῶ—I will pour out, or forth," by the *Septuagint*.—*Ed.*

[2] דַי not only means sufficiency, but also what is necessary to suffice, demand, requirement, as in Lev. xxv. 26, בְּדֵי גְאֻלָּתוֹ, according to the demand of his redemption, or what was necessary or sufficient for his redemption. See Deut. xxv. 2, where it means "according to what his sin may require," or literally, "according to the requirement of his sin." See also Nah. ii. 13, בְּדֵי גְרוֹתֶיהָ, "for the demand of his whelps," or, for what was necessary to suffice his whelps. There is a similar phrase to what we find here in Ps. lxxii. 7, עַד בְּלִי יָרֵחַ, "until no moon," that is, until there be no moon. The literal rendering then of the phrase here would be, "until no demand," that is, until nothing be required fully to suffice. Corresponding with this is the version of the *Septuagint* "ἕως τοῦ ἐκπερισσεῦσαι —until there should be enough."—*Ed.*

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fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

vobis fructum terræ, et non abortiet vobis vitis in agro, dicit Iehova exercituum.

God now again confirms the truth, that he would not in one way only be bountiful to them. He might indeed distribute to us daily our food, as we know that he thus fed his people in the wilderness; but his will is that the seed should rot in the earth, that it should then germinate, and in course of time grow, until it shoots into ears of corn; but it is still in no small danger, nay the corn is subject to many evils before it be gathered into the garner; for the locusts, the worms, the mildew, and other things may destroy it. God therefore, in order to set forth his kindness to men, enumerates here the ways and the means by which food is preserved; for it would not be enough that the seed should germinate, and that there should appear evidences of a great produce, the ears being fine and abundant, but it is necessary that the ears of corn themselves, before they become ripe, should be preserved from above; for on the one hand the chafers, the locusts, the worms, and other grubs, may suddenly creep in and devour the corn while in the field, and on the other hand, storms, and hail, and mildew, and other pestilential things, as I have said, may prove ruinous to the corn.

Hence God shows here, that he takes constant care of us, and every day and every night performs the office of a good and careful head of a family, who always watches for its benefit.

In the word *devourer*, I include all the evils to which we see that corn is subject; he therefore says, *he shall not destroy the fruit of the earth; nor bereaved shall be the vine for you in the fields.* The verb שכל, *shecal*, properly means to bereave or to deprive; but as this version, "bereaved shall not be vine," would be harsh, some have rendered the words thus, "Miscarry shall not vine," which I do not disapprove: *Miscarry* then *shall not the vine for you in the fields, saith Jehovah of hosts.*[1] It follows—

[1] There is no necessity for giving to שכל here any other than its ordi-

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12. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

12. Et beatos dicent vos cunctæ gentes, quia eritis vos terra desiderii (desiderabilis) dicit Iehova exercituum.

This verse is taken from the law, in which among other things God promises so happy a state to his chosen people, that the nations themselves would acknowledge in them the blessing of God. There is yet a contrast to be understood, —that having fallen into such misery, they were become as it were detestable to all nations, according to what the law also declares concerning them, "If thou shalt keep my precepts, all nations shall call thee blessed; but if thou wilt despise me, thou shalt be a sport to all nations, all shall shake the head and move the lips; yea, they shall be astonished at the sight of thy misery, and whosoever shall hear his ears will tingle." (Deut. xxviii. 1, 15.) As then the Jews were consumed as it were in their miseries, the Prophet says, "If you turn to God, that happiness which he has promised you shall not be withheld; he has it as it were ready in his hand, like a treasure that is hidden, according to what is said in Ps. xxxi. 19, 'How great is the abundance of thy goodness! but it is laid up for them who fear thee.'" God then means, that he will not prostitute his blessing to dogs and swine, but that it is always in reserve for his children, who are teachable and obedient. *The nations* then *shall call you blessed*, for ye shall *be a land of desire.*

This promise also is taken from the law, in which God says, that he had not in vain separated that land from the rest, because it was to be an example or a representation of his kindness through the whole world. We indeed know

nary meaning of bereaving or depriving. The reference is to depredators who bereaved or stripped the vine of its fruit—an evil common in a confused and disordered state of things.

The word לָכֶם, "on your account," is repeated in this verse three times; and it has no doubt an emphatic meaning. What is intimated evidently is, that the evils promised here to be removed were on their account, *i.e.* for their sins. I render the verse thus,—

And I will restrain on your account the devourer,
And he shall not destroy on your account the fruit of the ground,
And bereaved on your account shall not be the vine in the field,
Saith the Lord of hosts.—*Ed.*

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that God has ever been bountiful even to all nations, so as to satisfy them abundantly with provisions; but the land of Israel is called the land of desire, or a desirable land, because it was the special scene of God's bounty, not only as to meat and drink, but also as to other more excellent blessings. He now adds—

13. Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee?

14. Ye have said, It *is* vain to serve God; and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

15. And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered.

13. Invaluerunt contra me verba vestra, dicit Iehova; et dixistis, In quo locuti sumus contra te?

14. Dixistis, Frustra servitur Deo et quæ utilitas? quia custodivimus custodiam ejus, et quia ambulavimus supplices (*vel*, humiles; in obscuro vultu, *ad verbum*) coram facie Iehovæ exercituum.

15. Et nunc beatos dicimus superbos, &c.

Here again God expostulates with the Jews on account of their impious and wicked blasphemy in saying, that he disappointed his servants, and that he made no difference between good and evil, because he was kind to the unfaithful and the faithful indiscriminately, and also that he overlooked the obedience rendered to him.

He says now that their *words grew strong;* by which he denotes their insolence, as though he had said, *Vous avez gagné le plus haut;* for חזק, *chezak*, is to be strong. He means that such was the waywardness of the Jews that it could not by any means be checked; they were like men whom we see, who when once seized by rage and madness, become so vociferous that they will not listen to any admonitions or sane counsels. At first they murmur and are only heard to whisper; but when they have attained full liberty, they then send forth, as I have said, their furious clamours against heaven. This is the sin which the Prophet now condemns by saying, that the Jews grew strong in crying against God.[1] They again answer and say, *In what*

[1] Your words have waxen bold against me.—*Newcome.*

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have we spoken against thee?[1] It appears from these so many repetitions that the hypocrisy, which was united with great effrontery, could not be easily corrected in a people so refractory: it ought indeed to have come to their minds that they had wickedly accused God. But they acknowledge here no fault, "What meanest thou?" as though they wished to arraign the Prophet for having falsely charged them, inasmuch as they were conscious of no wrong.

He then gives the reason why he said, that their words grew strong against God, that is, that they daringly and furiously spoke evil of God; and the reason was, because they *said, that God was worshipped in vain.* They thought that they worshipped God perfectly; and this was their false principle; for hypocrites ever lay claim to complete holiness, and cannot bear to confess their own evils; even when their conscience goads them, they deceive themselves with vain flatteries, and always endeavour to draw over them some veil that their disgrace may not appear before men. Hence hypocrites seek to deceive themselves, God, angels, and men; and when they are inflated with the confidence that they worship God purely, rightly, and without any defect, and that they are without any blame, they will betray the virulence which lies within, whenever God does not help them as they wish, whenever he submits not to their will: for when they are prosperous, God is vauntingly blessed by them; but as soon as he withdraws his hand and begins to prove their patience, they will then show, as I have said, what sort of worshippers of God they are. But in the service of God the chief thing is this—that men deny themselves and give themselves up

Your words against me have been hard.—*Henderson.*

Ye have made heavy (or, overcharged—ἐβαρύνατε) against me your words.—*Septuagint.*

To "grow strong" is the idea expressed by *Jerome* and *Marckius;* and it is the common meaning of the verb. "Strong of forehead" in Ezek. iii. 7, is rendered "impudent" in our version, and very justly. Impudence or insolence is what is here evidently meant,—

Insolent against me have been your words.—*Ed.*

[1] Rather, "What have we been talking together against thee?" The verb is in Niphal, and only found so here, in the sixteenth verse, Ps. cxix. 23, and Ezek. xxxiii. 30. It denotes a mutual converse, a talking together, or a frequent converse —*Ed.*

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to be ruled by God, and never raise a clamour when he humbles them.

We hence see how it was that the Jews found fault with God; for they were persuaded that they fully performed their duty, which was yet most false; and then, they were not willing to submit to God, and to undertake his yoke, because they did not consider in how many ways they had provoked God's wrath, and what just and multiplied reasons he has for chastising his people, even when they do nothing wrong. As then they did not seriously consider any of these things, they thought that he was unjust to them, *In vain* then *do we serve God.* These thoughts, as we have said, sometimes come across the minds of the faithful; but they, as it becomes them, resist such thoughts: the Jews, on the contrary, as though they were victorious, vomited forth these blasphemies against God.

In vain we serve God; what benefit? they said: *for we have kept his charge, we have walked obscurely,* or humbly, *before Jehovah of hosts;*[1] and yet we are constrained to *call the proud,* or the impious, *happy.* Here they bring a twofold accusation against God, that they received no reward for their piety when they faithfully discharged their duty towards God,—and also that it was better with the ungodly and the despisers of God than with them. We hence see how reproachfully they exaggerated what they deemed the injustice of God, at least how they themselves imagined that he disappointed the just of their deserved reward, and that he favoured the ungodly and the wicked as though he was pleased with them, as though he intended the more to

[1] The verse is differently arranged in our version, and by most interpreters. The first sentence is a general announcement, and what follows is an expansion and an illustration of that announcement—

14. Ye have said, "It is vain to serve God;
For what profit is it that we have kept his charge,
And that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?
15. We therefore now felicitate the proud;
Even built up have been the workers of wickedness,
They have even tempted God and escaped."

The word for "tempted" is בחן, which commonly means to try, to prove, to test a thing; but used here evidently in a bad sense: they presumptuously tried, as it were, the patience of God, and "escaped," *i.e.*, from the punishment which they deserved.—*Ed.*

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exasperate the sorrow of his own servants, who, though they faithfully worshipped, yet saw that they did so in vain, as God concealed himself and did not regard their services.

That the good also are tempted, as we have said, by thoughts of this kind, is no wonder, when the state of things in the world is in greater confusion. Even Solomon says, "All things happen alike to the just and to the unjust, to him who offers sacrifices, and to him who does not sacrifice," (Eccles. ix. 2,) hence the earth is full of impiety and contempt. There is then an occasion for indignation and envy offered to us; but as God designedly tries our faith by such confusions, we must remember that we must exercise patience. It is not at the same time enough for us to submit to God's judgment, except we also consider that we are justly distressed; and that though we may be attentive to what is just and upright, many vices still cleave to us, and that we are sprinkled with many spots, which provoke God's wrath against us. Let us then learn to form a right judgment as to what our life is, and then let us bear in mind how many are the reasons why God should sometimes deal roughly with us. Thus all our envying will cease, and our minds will be prepared calmly to obey. In short, these considerations will check whatever perverseness there may be in us, so that neither our wicked thoughts nor our words will be so strong as to rise in rebellion against God.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we continue to afford many and various reasons to induce thee to withdraw thy blessing, and to show thyself displeased with us,—O grant, that we may patiently bear thy scourges, by which thou chastisest us, and also profit under them, and so contend with all our depraved affections and the corruptions of the flesh, that we may become partakers of thy paternal kindness, which thou offerest to us, and also so taste of thy goodness, which in innumerable ways is manifested towards us, that it may keep us in the pursuit of true religion; finally, may our tongues be consecrated to magnify thy judgment and to celebrate thy justice, that whatever happens to us, we may always serve thee through our whole life as our Father, and declare also thy goodness towards us, and confess that we are justly

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punished whenever thou visitest us with severity, until we shall at length reach that blessed rest, which is to be the end of all our evils, and an entrance, not only into life, but also into that full glory and happiness, which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Eightieth.

We saw in our last lecture that the Jews were indignant, because God did not treat them with more kindness, as they thought that they rightly performed their duty towards Him. We said that such an expostulation can never be justly made by men; for though they may find God rigid, there are yet always many reasons why he should by various troubles exercise them; but hypocrites seem to themselves to be of all men the most perfect, though they have only the guise or mask of religion. They indeed say that they have kept the Law, but when we come to the test, their emptiness is found out; for the main thing in the Law is wanting, that is, integrity of heart; nay, in the outward life they are found to be transgressors.

However this may be, they boasted that they kept the law, as we find in this passage, *We have kept his charge.* The doctrine of the law is here by a metaphor called a charge or keeping (*custodia,*) because it rules us, it confines us also within limits that we may not wander in uncertainty, it restrains our corrupt desires; in short, it keeps us under the fear of God and in the best order. Had the Jews considered this, they could never have dared to ascribe so much to themselves. Now this word, then commonly used, is adopted by the Prophet, and thus he shows how little attention they gave to the consideration of God's law; for they thought that their whole life was conformable to all the commandments, and yet they conformed hardly to the thousandth part of them. They add, *We have walked with a dark face* or dress.[1] There is here also a metaphor, for

[1] "Ικέται—supplicants," by the *Sept.*,—"tristes—sad," by *Jerome*,—"with a depressed spirit," by the *Targum*,—"mournfully," in our version, and by *Newcome* and *Henderson*. The first meaning of the word is

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they meant that they had been humble and lowly before God. It is indeed no ordinary thing in God's service to lay aside all pride and vain confidence, and to walk humbly with him: but hypocrites, like apes, imitate what God requires and approves; and at the same time they say nothing of changing the heart. Fear and sorrow are required, according to what we have seen in the Prophet Micah; but hypocrites think that a dejected countenance is enough; and hence they often pretend sorrow, while they inwardly please and flatter themselves: and on this account we find in Isaiah, the fifty-eighth chapter, as well as in this place, that they bring a charge against God, that he did not regard them, when they walked with a sad countenance, when they macerated themselves with fastings: in short, when by various other performances they showed great holiness, they brought an accusation against God, because he disregarded all these things, or made not that account of them which they expected.

Let us then remember, that the Jews were guilty of two errors; first, they presented to God an empty appearance for true humility, for they were no doubt swollen with false confidence though they pretended to be abject and low before God; secondly, they claimed for themselves more than what was just, for though there may have been some apparent modesty and submissiveness in them, yet they exceeded due limits; for we always swell with presumption, at least we are never thoroughly freed from it. They then falsely pretended, that they walked lowly and dejectedly before God. It follows—

"black" or "dark;" but it is used to express grief, sorrow, or mourning. It is rendered "σκυθρωπαζων—being gloomy or sorrowful," by the *Sept.*, in Psalm xxxviii. 6; xlii. 9; xliii. 2. It is here used adverbially, and may be rendered either sorrowfully or mournfully. "The walking mournfully has reference to those going about in sackcloth and ashes, pretending to sorrow on account of their sins."—*Henderson.*

"They walked mournfully before God," observes *Henry*. "Whereas God had required them to serve him with gladness, and to walk cheerfully before him. They, by their own superstitions, made the service of God a task and drudgery to themselves, and then complained of it as a hard service. The yoke of Christ is easy, it is the yoke of Antichrist that is heavy." —*Ed.*

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15. And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered.

15. Et nunc nos beatos dicimus superbos; etiam ædificantur qui faciunt iniquitatem, etiam tentant Deum et liberantur.

This verse is connected with the last, for the force of these words, "We have walked sorrowfully before God and have carefully kept his precepts," does not fully appear, except this clause be added—that they saw in the meantime that the proud flourished and had their delights, as though they said, "We strive to deserve well of God by our services; he overlooks all our religious acts, and pours as it were all his bounty on our enemies, who are yet ungodly and profane." We now see how these verses are connected together, for God disappointed the Jews of the reward they thought due to them, and in the meantime bestowed on the impious and undeserving his kindness.

To call any one blessed, as we have before seen, is to acknowledge that God's blessing is upon him, according to what God had promised, "Behold, all nations shall call thee blessed." So a changed state of things is here set forth, for the Jews, when they were miserable, called others blessed; not that they willingly declared this, but envy forced them to complain of the cheerful and happy state of the Gentiles, who were yet ungodly. And by the *proud* they meant all the despisers of God, a part being mentioned for the whole; and they were so called, because faith alone humbles us. Many unbelievers are indeed lauded for their humility, but no one becomes really humble without being first emptied of every conceit as to his own virtues. Some rise up against God, and rob him of what is his own, and then it is no wonder that they act insolently towards their neighbours, since they dare even to raise up their horns against God himself. And in many parts of Scripture the unbelieving are called proud, in order that we may know that we cannot be formed and habituated to humility until we submit to the yoke of God, so that he may turn us wherever he wishes, and until we cast aside every confidence in ourselves.[1]

[1] *Leigh* says, that the verb, from which the word rendered here "proud" is derived, means to *deal arrogantly, insolently, to be lifted up with*

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As well as, they said; for גַּם, *gam*, is here repeated, and must be rendered "as well as," that is, "All who do iniquity as well as all who tempt God, *are built up* and *are delivered*. In the first place what is general is stated, and then what is particular, and yet the Prophet speaks of the same persons, for he first calls God's despisers iniquitous, and he afterwards says, that the same tempted God, which is more special. The sum of the whole is,—that God's favour was conspicuous towards the despisers of the law, for they lived prosperously, and were also delivered, and found God their helper in adversity.

The verb, to *build*, is taken in Hebrew in the sense of prospering, and is applied to many things. When therefore any one grows and increases in honours or in riches, when he accumulates wealth, or when he is raised as it were by degrees to a higher condition, he is said to be built up. It is also added that they were *delivered*, for it would not be enough to acquire much wealth, except aid from God comes in adversity, for no one, even the most fortunate, is exempt from every evil. Hence to building up the Prophet adds this second clause,—that God delivered the wicked from all evils, as though he covered them under his shadow, and as though they were his clients. With regard to the second verb, when he says that the ungodly *tempted* God, it is, we know, the work of unbelief to contend with God. The Prophet used the same word shortly before, when he said, "Prove me in this:" but God then, after the manner of men, submitted to a trial; here, on the contrary, the Prophet condemns that insolence which very commonly prevails in the world, when men seek to confine God, and to impose on him a law, and to inquire into his judgments: it is in short as though they had a right to prescribe to him according to their own caprice, so that he should not do this or that, and which if he did, to call on him to plead his own cause. We now then perceive what it is to prove or tempt God. It follows—

swelling pride. It is applied in Ps. cxxiv. 5, to the swelling waves of the sea. To be insolent or presumptuous against God seems to be intended here.—*Ed*.

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16. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard *it;* and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

16. Tunc loquuti sunt timentes Iehovam quisque ad socium suum; et attendit Iehova, et audivit; et scriptus est liber memoriæ (*vel,* memorialis) coram facie ejus pro timentibus Iehovam, et cogitantibus de nomine ejus, (*vel,* in pretio habentibus nomen ejus.)

In this verse the Prophet tells us that his doctrine had not been without fruit, for the faithful had been stimulated, so that they animated one another, and thus restored each other to a right course. They who explain the words—that the faithful spoke, indefinitely, pervert the meaning of the Prophet, and they also suppress the particle אָז, *az*, then. The very subject proves that a certain time is denoted, as though the Prophet had said, that before he addressed the people and vehemently reproved their vices, there was much indifference among them, but that at length the faithful were awakened.

We are hence taught that we are by nature slothful and tardy, until God as it were plucks our ears; there is therefore need of warnings and stimulants. But let us also learn to attend to what is taught, lest it should become frigid to us. We ought at the same time to observe, that all were not moved by the Prophet's exhortations to repent, but those who feared God: the greater part no doubt securely went on in their vices, and even openly derided the Prophet's teaching. As then the truth profited only those who feared God, let us not wonder that it is despised at this day by the people in general; for it is given but to a few to obey God's word; and the conversion of the heart is the peculiar gift of the Holy Spirit. There is therefore no reason for pious teachers to despond, when they do not see their doctrine received everywhere and by all, or when they see that but a few make any progress in it; but let them be content, when the Lord blesses their labour and renders it profitable and fruitful to some, however small their number may be.

But the Prophet not only says that individuals were touched with repentance, but also that they *spoke among themselves;*[1] by which he intimates, that our efforts ought

[1] Or, "talked together:" the verb is in Niphal, as we find it in ver. 13.

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to be extended to our brethren: and it is an evidence of true repentance, when each one endeavours as much as he can to unite to himself as many friends as possible, so that they may with one consent return to the way from which they had departed, yea, that they may return to God whom they had forsaken. This then is what we are to understand by the words spoken mutually by God's servants, which the Prophet does not express.

He says that Jehovah *attended* and *heard*, and that a *book of remembrance was written before him*. He proves here that the faithful had not in vain repented, for God became a witness and a spectator: and this part is especially worthy of being noticed; for we lose not our labour when we turn to God, because he will receive us as it were with open arms.

Our Prophet wished especially to show, that God *attended;* and hence he uses three forms of speaking. One word would have been enough, but he adds two more; and this is particularly emphatical, that there was a *book of remembrance written*. His purpose then was by this multiplicity of words to give greater encouragement to the faithful, that they might be convinced that their reward would be certain as soon as they devoted themselves to God, for God would not be blind to their piety.

The Prophet at the same time seems to point it out as something miraculous, that there were found then among the people any who were yet capable of being healed, since so much wickedness had prevailed among the people, nay, had become hardened, as we have seen, to an extreme obsti-

The good as well as the wicked talked together, mutually conversed, or talked often. The *Targum* renders it, "They multiplied speech;" our version introduces "often." *Newcome* gives the simple word, "spake;" and *Henderson* has "conversed." If the verb in Niphal has a frequentative meaning, and not a reciprocal, our version is right, "spake often." Then it should be so rendered in verse 13. It is to be observed that what the ungodly often spoke or said, is mentioned, but not the frequent or the mutual converse of the godly. *Jerome* imagines it to have been a defence of God's dealings with them.

The words which follow, "Every one to his neighbour," seem to favour the opinion that speaking "often" is the real meaning of the verb here used; for the fact of speaking "together" is conveyed in these words: and yet speaking "together" is more suitable in the thirteenth verse.—*Ed.*

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nacy; for there was nothing sound or upright either among the priests or the common people. As then they had long indulged with loose reins in all kinds of wickedness, it was incredible, that any could be converted, or that any piety and fear of God could be found remaining among them. This then is the reason why the Prophet says, that God *attended* and *heard*, and that a *book was written;* he speaks as though of a thing unusual, which could not but appear as a miracle in a state of things so confused and almost past hope. The design of the whole is to show, that the faithful ought not to doubt, but that their repentance is ever regarded by God, and especially when the utmost despair lays hold on their minds; for it often distresses the godly, when they see no remedy to be hoped for; then they think that their repentance will be useless: hence it is that the Prophet dwells so much on this point, in order that they might feel assured, that though no hope appeared, yet repentance availed for their salvation before God; and for this reason he adds, that this *book was written for those who feared God.*[1]

With regard to the participle חשבים, *cheshebim*, the verb חשב, *chesheb*, means to reckon or to count, and also to think; and so some render it here, "Who think of his name." And doubtless this is a rare virtue; for we see that forgetfulness easily creeps over us, which extinguishes the fear of God, so that we take such a liberty, as though they who forget God can sin with impunity: and hence it is said often in the Psalms, that the fear of God is before the eyes of the godly. This seems frigid at the first view; but he who remembers God has made much progress in his religious course; and we also find by experience that the mere remembrance of God, when real, is a bridle to us sufficiently strong to restrain all our depraved lusts. But as the price of a thing is attained by reckoning, the other version is appropriate,—that the faithful value or esteem the name of God.[2] It follows—

[1] In the "book of remembrance" we have an allusion to the records kept by kings. See Ezra vi. 2, 3; Esth. vi. 1, 2.—*Ed.*

[2] This latter meaning is the true one. The word never means what is understood by "thinking on" a thing; but to count, to reckon, and

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17. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

17. Et erunt mihi, dicit Iehova exercituum, die illa qua ego facio, peculium; et parcam eis (super eos *ad verbum*) sicuti parcit vir suo filio, qui obsequitur ei.

He shows by the issue itself why a book of remembrance was written—that God in due time would again undertake to defend and cherish his Church. Though then for a time many troubles were to be sustained by the godly, yet the Prophet shews that they did not in vain serve God; for facts would at length prove that their obedience has not been overlooked. But the two things which he mentions ought to be noticed; for a book of remembrance is first written before God, and then God executes what is written in the book. When therefore we seem to serve God in vain, let us know that the obedience we render to him will come to an account, and that he is a just Judge, though he may not immediately stretch forth his hand to us.

In the first place then the Prophet testifies that God knows what is done by every one; and in the second place he adds that he will in his own time perform what he has decreed. So also in judgments, he preserves the same order in knowing and in executing. For when he said to Abraham that the cry of Sodom came up to heaven, (Gen. xviii. 20,) how great and how supine was the security of the city. How wantonly and how savagely they despised every authority to the very last moment! But God had long before ascended his tribunal, and had taken an account of their wickedness. So also in the case of the godly, though he seems to overlook their obedience, yet he has not his eyes

hence to contrive, to plan, to devise, and hence also to make an account of, to value, to regard. To make an account of and thus to regard and reverence, is its meaning here. The whole verse may be thus rendered,—

16. Then spake they often who feared Jehovah,
Every one to his neighbour;
And hearken did Jehovah and hear;
And there was written a book of remembrance before him,
For those who feared Jehovah,
Yea, for those who regarded his name.

The last two lines describe the same persons,—they feared God and valued and regarded his name or his authority.—*Ed.*

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closed, or his ears closed, for there is a book of memorial written before him.

Hence he says, *They shall be in the day I make.* The verb is put by itself, but we may easily learn from the context that it refers to the restoration of the Church. *In the day* then *in which I shall make*, that is, complete what I have already said; for he had before promised to restore the Church. As then he speaks of a known thing, he says shortly, *In the day I shall make*, or complete my work, *they shall be to me a peculiar treasure.*[1] This phrase confirms what I have already stated—that God has his season and opportunity, in order that there may be no presumption in us to prescribe to him the time when he is to do this or that. In the day then when he shall gather his Church, it will then appear that we are his peculiar treasure.

Thus the Prophet in these words exhorts us to patience, lest it should be grievous to us to groan under our burden, and not to find God's help according to our wishes, and lest also it should be grievous to us to bear troubles in common with the whole Church. Were one or two of us subject to the cross, and doomed to sorrow and grief in this world, our condition might seem hard; but since the godly, from the first to the last, are made to be our associates in bearing the cross of Christ, and to be conformed to his example, there is no reason for any one of us to shun his lot; for we are not better than the holy patriarchs, apostles, and so many

[1] Such is the arrangement of the sentence as given in the *Sept.*, the *Targum*, and by *Jerome*, and most interpreters. "The peculiar treasure" is connected with "they shall be to me," and not with the verb "make," as in our version, which is that of *Jun.* and *Trem.* The intervening clause, "In the day," &c., may be rendered in a way different. The verb "to make" means sometimes to appoint, to ordain, to constitute. The following version of *Newcome* is no doubt the correct one—

They shall be unto me, saith Jehovah of hosts,
In the day which I shall appoint, a peculiar treasure.

The "day" is again mentioned in the next chapter, verse 3, and the same words come after it, which ought to be rendered in the same way. *Henderson's* version is materially the same.

The word rendered "jewels" in our version, is everywhere also rendered a peculiar treasure, or a special property. See Ex. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6. The common rendering of the *Sept.* is either περιποίησιν—a purchased acquisition, as here, or περιούσιον—peculiar, special, as in Ex. xix. 5. The latter is the word used here by *Symmachus.*—*Ed.*

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of the faithful whom God has exercised with the cross. Since then the common restoration of the Church is here set before us, let us know that a reason is here given for constancy and fortitude; for it would be disgraceful for us to faint, when we have so many leaders in this warfare, who by their examples stretch forth as it were their hands to us; for as Abraham, David, and other Patriarchs and Prophets, as well as Apostles, have suffered so many and so grievous troubles, ought not this fact to raise up our spirits? and if at any time our feet and our legs tremble, ought it not to be sufficient to strengthen us, that so many excellent chiefs and leaders invite us to persevere by their example? We then see that this has not been laid down for nothing, *when I shall make*, or complete my work.

By the words *peculiar treasure*, God intimates that the lot of the godly will be different from that of the world; as though he had said, "Ye are now so mixed together, that they who serve me seem not to be peculiar any more than strangers; but they shall then be my peculiar treasure." This is to be taken, as I have already mentioned, for the outward appearance; for we know that we have been chosen by God, before the foundation of the world, for this end—that we might be to him a peculiar treasure. But when we are afflicted in common with the wicked, or when we seem to be even rejected, and the ungodly, on the other hand, seem to have God propitious to them, then nothing seems less true than this promise. I therefore said that this ought to be referred to the outward appearance—that the faithful are God's peculiar treasure, that they are valued by him, and that he shows to them peculiar love, as to his own inheritance.

And this mode of speaking occurs in many parts of scripture; for God is often said to repudiate his people; the word separation, or divorce, is often mentioned; he is said to have destroyed his inheritance. Grievous is the trial, when God cherishes as it were in his bosom the ungodly, and we at the same time are exposed to every kind of misery; but we see what happened to the ancient Church: let us then arm ourselves for this contest, and be satisfied

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with the inward testimony of the Spirit, though outward things do not prosper.

He adds, *And I will spare them as a man spares*, &c. He states here a promise which ought especially to be observed: it contains two clauses; the first is, that the Jews who remained alive would render obedience to God, by which they would prove themselves to be children indeed, and not in name only: and the second is, that God would *forgive* them, that is, that he would exercise pardon in receiving their services, which could not otherwise please him. And there is no doubt but that the Spirit of regeneration is included in the words, *the son who serves him;* not that the faithful addressed here were wholly destitute of the fear of God; but God promises an increase of grace, as though he had said, "I will gather to myself the people who faithfully and sincerely worship me." Though then he speaks not here of the beginning of a religious and holy life, it is yet the same as though he had said, that the faithful would be under his government, that they might devote themselves to his service.

The second promise refers to another grace,—that God in his mercy would approve of the obedience of the godly, though in itself unworthy to come to his presence. How necessary this indulgence is to us, they who are really and truly acquainted with the fear of God, fully know. The sophists daringly prattle about merits, and fill themselves and others with empty pride; but they who understand that no man can stand before God's tribunal, do not dream of any merits, nor do they believe that they can bring anything before God, by which they can conciliate his favour. Hence their only refuge is what the Prophet here teaches us, that God *spares* them.

And it must be observed, that the Prophet does not speak simply of the remission of sins: our salvation, we know, consists of two things—that God rules us by his Spirit, and forms us anew in his own image through the whole course of our life,—and also that he buries our sins. But the Prophet refers here to the remission of sins, of which we have need as to our good works; for it is certain, that even

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when we devote ourselves with all possible effort and zeal to God's service there is yet something always wanting. Hence it is that no work, however right and perfect before men, deserves this distinction and honour before God. It is therefore necessary, even when we strive our utmost to serve God, to confess that without his forgiveness whatever we bring deserves rejection rather than his favour. Hence the Prophet says, that when God is reconciled to us, there is no reason to fear that he will reject us, because we are not perfect; for though our works be sprinkled with many spots, they will yet be acceptable to him, and though we labour under many defects, we shall yet be approved by him. How so? Because he will spare us: for a father is indulgent to his children, and though he may see a blemish in the body of his son, he will not yet cast him out of his house; nay, though he may have a son lame, or squint-eyed, or singular for any other defect, he will yet pity him, and will not cease to love him: so also is the case with respect to God, who, when he adopts us as his children, will forgive our sins. And as a father is pleased with every small attention when he sees his son submissive, and does not require from him what he requires from a servant; so God acts; he repudiates not our obedience, however defective it may be.[1]

We hence see the design and meaning of the Prophet,—that he promises pardon from God to the faithful, after having been reconciled to him, because they serve God as children willingly,—and that God also, though their works are unworthy of his favour, will yet count them as acceptable, even through pardon, and not on the ground of merit or worthiness.

[1] There is something more in the verb here used than the idea of "sparing." When followed as here by ל, it is commonly rendered by "having pity or compassion." See Exod. ii. 6; 1 Sam. xv. 3; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. It means a tender compassion or sympathy for another, such as is felt towards a weak, helpless, or miserable object.—*Ed.*

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as Satan strives to draw us away from every attention to true religion, when things in the world are in a state of disorder and confusion,—O grant, that we may know that thou carest for us; and if we perceive not this by what we find in the world, may we rely on thy word, and doubt not but that thou ever watchest over our safety; and being supported by this confidence, may we ever go on in the course of our calling: and as thou hast deigned to make us partakers of that evidence of thy favour, by which we know that we are reconciled to thee in thine only-begotten Son; and being thus made his members, may we never hesitate cheerfully to offer to thee our services, however defective they may be, since thou hast once promised to be a propitious Father to us, so as not rigidly to try what we offer to thee, but so graciously to accept it, that we may know that not only our sins, which justly deserve condemnation, are forgiven and remitted to us, but that thou also so bearest with our infirmities and our defects in our imperfect works, that we shall at length receive the reward which thou hast promised, and which we cannot attain through our merits, but through the sanctification of thy Spirit, and through the sprinkling of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Eighty-first.

We saw in the last lecture that no works of the faithful please God, except through a gratuitous acceptance: it hence follows, that nothing can be ascribed to merits without derogating from the grace of Christ; for if the value of works depends on this, that God is our Father and is reconciled to us in Christ, nothing can be more absurd than to set up works, which ought to be subordinated to this paternal favour of God.

We now see how these two things harmonize—that reward is promised to works, and that works themselves deserve nothing before God; for though God can justly reject them, he yet regards them as acceptable, because he forgives all their defects. Thus have we briefly stated the reason why our works are approved by God; they are not so on account of any worthiness, but through his favour alone; for there is

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no work which would not on account of its imperfection be displeasing to God, were he to require that it should be according to the rule of his law. Hence God departs from his own law and turns to mercy, that he may regard works as acceptable, which otherwise could not, being defective, stand before his presence. It now follows—

18. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

18. Et convertemini, et videbitis inter justum et impium, inter servientem Deo et eum qui non servit ei.

This verse at the first view seems to be addressed to the faithful; for there never has been a turning as to the reprobate: but as the word has a wide meaning, the passage may be suitably applied to the whole people, according to what we find in Zechariah, "They shall see him whom they have pierced;" for we have said that this might be understood both of the good and of the bad. So also the whole people might be viewed as addressed in these words. But when we more minutely examine all circumstances, it seems that Malachi more particularly addressed the ungodly, and checked again their furious blasphemies; for we find almost the same sentiment expressed here, as when he said, "The Lord whom ye expect shall come to his temple, and the angel of the covenant whom ye seek;" and at the same time he showed that the coming of Christ, which they said was advancing too slowly, would not be such as they desired or looked for. "Let not this delay," he says, "be grievous to you; for everything terrible which his majesty possesses will be turned on your heads; for he will come as an angry judge and an avenger: ye therefore in vain hope for any comfort or alleviation from his presence."

So also he says in this place, *Ye shall see this difference between the just and the unjust;* that is, "Ye shall find that God does not sleep in heaven, when the ungodly grow wanton on the earth and abandon themselves to every kind of wickedness: experience then will at length teach you, that men shall not thus with impunity become insolent against God, but that all your wickedness must come to a

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reckoning." When therefore he says, that they would find the difference between the godly and the ungodly, he means that they would find by the punishments which God would inflict, that men are not permitted to indulge their own depraved desires, as though God slept in heaven, forgetful of his office. Their blasphemy was, "In vain is God worshipped; what is the benefit? for we have kept his charge, and yet the proud are more happy than we are." As then they accused God of such a connivance, as though he disregarded and cast away his own servants, and showed favour to the wicked, Malachi returns them an answer and says, "Ye shall see how much the good differ from the evil; God indeed spares the wicked, but he will at length rise to judgment, and come armed suddenly upon them, and then ye shall know that all the deeds of men are noticed by him, and that wickedness shall not go unpunished, though God for a time delays his vengeance."

We now then perceive the Prophet's meaning—that the ungodly who clamour against God, as though he made no account either of the just or of the unjust, shall find, even to their own loss, that he is one who punishes wickedness.

As to the verb *turn*, I have already said that it has a wide meaning, and does not always mean repentance or the renovation of man: it may therefore be taken as signifying only a different state of things; as though he had said, "The dice shall be turned, and such will be your condition when God shall begin to execute his judgment, that he will then manifestly show that he has not forgotten his office, though he does not immediately hasten to execute his judgments." *Ye shall return* then *and see.* Yet if any one prefers to regard returning as the feeling of God's judgments, by which even the ungodly shall be touched, though without repentance, the view will not be unsuitable, and I am disposed to embrace it, that is, that the Lord will shake off the stupidity in which they were sunk, and will correct their madness, so that they will not dare to vomit forth so insolently their blasphemies, as they had been wont to do: *Ye* then *shall return;* that is, "I will make my judgment known to you, and ye shall not rush on headlong as wild

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beasts, for being taught by facts, ye shall learn the difference between the good and the bad."[1]

The *just*, and he who *serves* God, mean the same person. We hence learn that there is no justice where there is no obedience rendered to God. The first thing then in a good and an upright life, is to serve God; for it would be but of little benefit to be harmless towards men, when his right is denied: and we know that God is not rightly served but according to what his law prescribes. We must then always come to this,—that men must obey God, if they desire to form their life aright. Now follows—

CHAPTER IV.

1. For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

1. Quia ecce dies venit ardens tanquam clibanus; et erunt omnes superbi et omnes facientes iniquitatem stipula; et inflammabit eos dies qui venturus est, dicit Iehova exercituum, qui non relinquet illis radicem et ramum.

He confirms the previous verse, for he denounces ruin on all the reprobate and the despisers of God; and he also confirms what I have mentioned,—that he sets this threatening in opposition to the slanders which they commonly uttered against God, as though he had ceased to discharge his office as a judge. Though indeed he speaks in the third person, yet he is not deficient in force when he says,

Behold, come shall the day, which shall consume all the ungodly, as a burning oven the stubble. The comparison is very common which the Prophet uses, when he says, that the ungodly shall be like stubble: I will not therefore quote

[1] Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* regard this verb as used here adverbially. "And ye shall again discern, *or*, see the difference, between the righteous and the wicked." The *Septuagint* give it as a verb "ἐπιστρα-φήσεσθε—ye shall return." The same is done by *Jerome* and *Marckius*; and the latter gives a similar view of its import to what is given here. *Dathius* takes its meaning to be the same, "And being better taught (or instructed—*melius edocti*) ye shall then understand how great is the difference between the godly and the ungodly, between the worshipper of God and his despiser."—*Ed.*

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passages which must be well known, and they are so many that there is no need to adduce here either two or three of them. The vengeance of God is also often compared to fire and to a flame; and we know how fierce and how dreadful an element is fire, when it lays hold on wood or some other dry material. Hence according to the common usage of Scripture, the Prophet says, that the day of the Lord would be like an oven, and that the ungodly would be like stubble. The demonstrative particle, *Behold*, shows certainty, *Behold, I come.* The present time is put here for the future, a common thing in Hebrew. But the Prophet called the attention of the Jews as it were to what was present, that his prophecy might not appear doubtful, and that they might understand that God's vengeance was not far distant, but already suspended over their heads.

There is however a question as to the day which he points out. The greater part think that the Prophet speaks of the last coming of Christ, which seems not to me probable. It is indeed true that these and similar expressions, which everywhere occur in Scripture, have not their full accomplishment in this world; but God so suspends his judgments, as yet never to withhold from giving evidences of them, that the godly may have some props to their faith: for if God gave no specimen or proof of his providence, it would immediately occur to our minds, that there is to be no judgment; but he sets before us some examples, that we may learn that he will some time be the judge of the world. It seems then to me more probable, that the Prophet speaks here of the renovation of the Church: for the wrath of God was then at length more kindled against the Jews, when they had alienated themselves from Christ; for their last hope and their last remedy in their evils, was the aid of the Redeemer, and it was for the rejection of his favour that the Jews had to feel the dreadful punishment of their ingratitude. No sin could have been more atrocious than to have rejected the offered favour, in which their happiness and that of the whole world consisted. When the Prophet then says, that the *day would come*, he refers I think to the first coming of Christ; for the Jews made a confident boast of the coming

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of a Redeemer, and he gives them this answer—that the day of the Lord would come, such as they did not imagine, but a day which would wholly consume them, according to a quotation we have made from another Prophet, "What will be the day of the Lord to you? that day will not be light, but darkness, a thick darkness and not brightness." (Amos v. 18.) The day of the Lord will be an unhappy event to you, as though one escaped from the jaws of a lion, and fell at home on a serpent. So in this place he says that the day would come, which would consume them like an oven.

He says that *all the proud and the workers of iniquity* would be like *stubble*. He repeats their words, but somewhat ironically; for when they had said before that the proud were happy, they regarded themselves as being far from being such characters. Isaiah also in like manner condemned hypocrites, because they exposed to contempt their own brethren; for the worshippers of God were at that time in great reproach among the Jews; yea, hypocrites disdainfully treated the godly and the upright, as though they were the dregs and filth of the people. So also they said, "Behold, we are constrained, not without great sorrow, to look on the happiness of the ungodly; for the proud and the despisers of God enjoy prosperity, they live in pleasures." The Prophet now answers them ironically and says, "Ye shall see the difference which ye so much wish; for God will consume the proud and the ungodly." He says this of them; but it is, as I have stated, as though he had said, "When your mask is taken away, ye shall see where impiety is, that it is even in you; and therefore ye shall suffer the punishment which you have deserved." This is the return which he had before mentioned: for though the ungodly do not seriously and sincerely return to God, yet they are forced, willing or unwilling, to acknowledge their impiety when God constrains them. Hence after they had been constrained to examine their own life, God visited them with the punishment they most justly deserved, though judgment had been invoked by themselves.

He now adds, *And it will leave neither root nor branch.* He means here that their ruin would be complete, as though

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he had said, that no residue of them would be found. As he had made them like stubble, so he mentions *root and stalk;* for branch is improper here, as he speaks of stubble, and branches belong to trees. The meaning, however, is not obscure, which is—that such would be the consumption that nothing would remain. This, indeed, properly belongs to the last judgment; but, as I have said, this is no reason why God should not set before our eyes some evidences of that vengeance which awaits the ungodly, by which our faith may be more and more confirmed daily.[1]

With regard to God's name, which is mentioned twice, he reminds us that God does not execute his judgments in an even or a continued course, but that he has a fixed time, now for forbearance, then for vengeance, as it seems good to him. Whenever then the day of the Lord is mentioned in Scripture, let us know that God is bound by no laws, that he should hasten his work according to our hasty wishes; but the specific time is in his own power, and at his own will. On this subject I lightly touch only, because I have explained it more fully elsewhere. It follows—

2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

2. Et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum Sol justitiæ, et sanitas in alis ejus; et exibitis et salietis quasi vituli saginæ (*vel*, vituli pinguefacti.)

The Prophet now turns his discourse to the godly; and hence it appears more clearly that he has been hitherto threatening those gross hypocrites who arrogated sanctity to themselves alone, while yet they were continuing to provoke God's wrath; for he evidently addresses some different from

[1] Exceedingly forcible are the words of this verse—

For behold the day!
It comes burning like a furnace;
And all the proud, and every worker of iniquity, shall be stubble;
And burn them up shall the day that is coming,
Saith Jehovah of hosts,
So that not left to them shall be a root or a branch.

Very many MSS. have "workers" instead of "worker;" but it is of no consequence, as the singular is often used poetically for the plural. "Root" and "branch" is no doubt a proverbial phrase, including every thing.—*Ed.*

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those previously spoken of, when he says, *Arise to you*, &c.; he separates those who feared God, or the true servants of God, from that multitude with whom he has been hitherto contending. *Arise*, then, *to you who fear my name*, &c.

There is to be noticed here a contrast; for the body of the people were infected as it were with a general contagion, but God had preserved a few uncontaminated. As then he had been hitherto contending with the greatest part of the people, so he now gathers as it were apart the chosen few, and promises to them Christ as the author of salvation. For the godly, we know, trembled at threatenings, and would have almost fainted, had not God mitigated them. Whenever he denounced vengeance on sinners, the greater part either mocked, or became angry, at least were not duly impressed. Thus it happens that while God is thundering, the ungodly go on securely in their sinful courses; but the godly tremble at a word, and would be altogether cast down, were not God to apply a remedy.

Hence our Prophet softens the severity of the threatening which we have observed; as though he had said, that he had not announced the coming of Christ as terrible for the purpose of filling pious souls with fear, (for it was not spoken to them,) but only of terrifying the ungodly. The sum of the whole is briefly this—"Hearken ye," he says, "who fear God; for I have a different word for you, and that is, that the Sun of righteousness shall arise, which will bring healing in its wings. Let those despisers of God then perish, who, though they carry on war with him, yet seek to have him as it were bound to them; but raise ye up your heads, and patiently look for that day, and with the hope of it calmly bear your troubles." We now understand the import of this verse.

There is indeed no doubt but that Malachi calls Christ the Sun of righteousness; and a most suitable term it is, when we consider how the condition of the fathers differed from ours. God has always given light to his Church, but Christ brought the full light, according to what Isaiah teaches us, "On thee shall Jehovah arise, and the glory of God shall be seen in thee." (Is. lx. 12.) This can be applied to none

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but to Christ. Again he says, "Behold darkness shall cover the earth," &c.; "shine on thee shall Jehovah;" and farther, "There shall be now no sun by day nor moon by night; but God alone shall give thee light." (Is. lx. 19.) All these words show that Sun is a name appropriate to Christ; for God the Father has given a much clearer light in the person of Christ than formerly by the law, and by all the appendages of the law. And for this reason also is Christ called the light of the world; not that the fathers wandered as the blind in darkness, but that they were content with the dawn only, or with the moon and stars. We indeed know how obscure was the doctrine of the law, so that it may truly be said to be shadowy. When therefore the heavens became at length opened and clear by means of the gospel, it was through the rising of the Sun, which brought the full day; and hence it is the peculiar office of Christ to illuminate. And on this account it is said in the first chapter of John, that he was from the beginning the true light, which illuminates every man that cometh into the world, and yet that it was a light shining in darkness; for some sparks of reason continue in men, however blinded they are become through the fall of Adam and the corruption of nature. But Christ is peculiarly called light with regard to the faithful, whom he delivers from the blindness in which all are involved by nature, and whom he undertakes to guide by his Spirit.

The meaning then of the word sun, when metaphorically applied to Christ, is this,—that he is called a sun, because without him we cannot but wander and go astray, but that by his guidance we shall keep in the right way; and hence he says, "He who follows me walks not in darkness." (John viii. 12.)

But we must observe that this is not to be confined to the person of Christ, but extended to the gospel. Hence Paul says, "Awake thou who sleepest, and rise from darkness, and Christ shall illuminate thee." (Eph. v. 14.) Christ then daily illuminates us by his doctrine and his Spirit; and though we see him not with our eyes, yet we find by experience that he is a sun.

He is called the sun of *righteousness*, either because of his

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perfect rectitude, in whom there is nothing defective, or because the righteousness of God is conspicuous in him: and yet, that we may know the light, derived from him, which proceeds from him to us and irradiates us, we are not to regard the transient concerns of this life, but what belongs to the spiritual life. The first thing is, that Christ performs towards us the office of a sun, not to guide our feet and hands as to what is earthly, but that he brings light to us, to show the way to heaven, and that by its means we may come to the enjoyment of a blessed and eternal life. We must secondly observe, that this spiritual light cannot be separated from righteousness; for how does Christ become our sun? It is by regenerating us by his Spirit into righteousness, by delivering us from the pollutions of the world, by renewing us after the image of God. We now then see the import of the word righteousness.[1]

He adds, *And healing in its wings.* He gives the name of wings to the rays of the sun; and this comparison has much beauty, for it is taken from nature, and most fitly ap-

[1] There is something incongruous in the expression, "the Sun of righteousness." Hence some have considered that צדקה means here benignity or beneficence. "Righteousness," says *Leigh*, "in a special sense, in the Hebrew and the Oriental tongues, signifieth *beneficence* or *bounty*;" and he refers to *Mede* on Ps. cxii. 6. It is evidently added as descriptive of what the sun is, and used, as the case often is in Hebrew, instead of an adjective. Now a righteous sun would not be proper, but a benignant or a beneficent sun would convey a suitable idea. The real meaning would then be conveyed by such a version as the following,—

But arise for you, who fear my name,
Shall a beneficent sun,
With healing in its beams,
And ye shall go forth and leap
Like calves freed from the stall.

"Understand," says *Marckius*, "by righteousness either benignity and beneficence, or truth, or complete constancy, or the manifold righteousness of God, which shone in him, or uncontaminated uprightness and rectitude which appeared in him both as God and man, or as a Mediator, which so shines, that he diffuses it to all the faithful in the gifts of justification and sanctification."

Jerome's exposition is, that Christ is called the Sun of righteousness, because he determines all things justly, and reveals, discovers what is good and what is evil, what is virtuous and what is vicious.

The pronoun affixed to "wings," or beams, or rays, is feminine, which shows the gender of "sun," שמש; but "its" is the most appropriate rendering. He or she is everything in Hebrew, and it is in so Welsh.—*Ed.*

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plied to Christ. There is nothing, we know, more cheering and healing than the rays of the sun; for ill-savour would soon overwhelm us, even within a day, were not the sun to purge the earth from its dregs; and without the sun there would be no respiration. We also feel a sort of relief at the rising of the sun; for the night is a kind of burden. When the sun sets, we feel as it were a heaviness in all our members; and the sick are exhilarated in the morning and experience a change from the influence of the sun; for it brings to us healing in its wing. But the Prophet has expressed what is still more,—that a clear sun in a serene sky brings healing; for there is an implied opposition between a cloudy or stormy time and a clear and bright season. During time of serenity we are far more cheerful, whether we be in health or in sickness; and there is no one who does not derive some cheerfulness from the serenity of the heavens: but when it is cloudy, even the most healthy feels some inconvenience.

According to this view Malachi now says, that there would be *healing in the wings* of Christ, inasmuch as many evils were to be borne by the true servants of God; for if we consider the history of those times, it will appear that the condition of that people was most grievous. He now promises a change to them; for the restoration of the Church would bring them joy. See then in what way he meant there would be healing in the wings of Christ; for the darkness would be dissipated, and the heavens would be free from clouds, so as to exhilarate the minds of the godly.

By calling the godly those who *fear God*, he adopts the common language of Scripture; for we have said that the chief part of righteousness and holiness consists in the true worship of God: but something new is here expressed; for this fear is what peculiarly belongs to true religion, so that men submit to God, though he is invisible, though he does not address them face to face, though he does not openly show his hand armed with scourges. When therefore men of their own accord reverence the glory of God, and acknowledge that the world is governed by him, and that they are under his authority, this is a real evidence of true religion: and this is what the Prophet means by *name*. Hence they who

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fear the name of God, desire not to draw him down from heaven, nor seek manifest signs of his presence, but suffer their faith to be thus tried, so that they adore and worship God, though they see him not face to face, but only through a mirror and that darkly, and also through the displays of his power, justice, and other attributes, which are evident before our eyes.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast appointed thine only-begotten Son to be like a sun to us, we may not be blind, so as not to see his brightness; and that since he is pleased to guide us daily into the way of salvation, may we follow him and never be detained by any of the impediments of this world, so as not to pursue after that celestial life to which thou invitest us; and that as thou hast promised that he is to come and gather us into the eternal inheritance, may we not in the meantime grow wanton, but on the contrary watch with diligence and be ever attentively looking for him; and may we not reject the favour which thou hast been pleased to offer us in him, and thus grow torpid in our dregs, but on the contrary be stimulated to fear thy name and truly to worship thee, until we shall at length obtain the fruit of our faith and piety, when he shall appear again for our final redemption, even that sun which has already appeared to us, in order that we might not remain involved in darkness, but hold on our way in the midst of darkness, even the way which leads us to heaven.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Eighty-second.

MALACHI, after having said that the Sun of righteousness would arise on the Jews, now adds that it would be for their joy, for as sorrow lays hold on the faithful when they are without Christ, or when they think him far removed from them, so his favour is their chief happiness and real joy. Hence the angel when he made known to the shepherds that Christ was born, thus introduces his message, "Behold, I declare to you great joy." (Luke ii. 10.)

Now though the comparison might seem rather unnatural, yet it was not without reason that the Prophet said that the

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Jews would be like *fattened calves*, for the change of which he speaks was incredible; hence it was necessary that the subject should be stated in a very homely manner, that they might entertain hope.

There is in the words *going forth*, an implied contrast, for anxiety had long held them as it were captives, but now they were to go forth and be at liberty, according to what takes place when things change for the better; we then openly declare our joy to one another, and we seek as it were a wide place for giving vent to our feelings. We now see why the Prophet says that the Jews would *go forth*: they had been before confined as it were within narrow limits, but God would now give them occasion for rejoicing, according to what Paul says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.)[1] It follows—

3. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the Lord of hosts.

3. Et pessundabitis impios, quia erunt pulvis sub plantis pedum vestrorum, in die qua ego facio, (*alii vertunt*, quam ego facio,) dicit Iehova exercituum.

When God promises redemption to his Church, he usually mentions what is of an opposite character, even the destruction and ruin of his enemies, and he does this on purpose lest envy should annoy or harass the faithful, while seeing

[1] *Newcome's* version of the last line is as follows—

And ye shall go forth and thrive as bullocks of the stall.

Henderson's is—

And ye shall go forth and leap as calves of the stall.

The latter part is rendered by the *Septuagint* "Ye shall leap (or frisk—σκιρτήσατε) like calves let loose from bonds." This conveys the idea, for פָּשָׁה, means first to spread, to be diffused, and then to range at large, to leap, to frisk. The context favours this view: they would go forth, that is, from confinement to the fields, and leap like calves of the stall, or from the stall, which are tied up during the night but are let loose when the sun arises, and allowed to range at large in the field.

To apply this as a prophecy to the escape of the Christians from Jerusalem when destroyed by the Romans, has nothing in the context to justify it, but everything to the contrary. The effect here produced is ascribed to the influence of the Sun of righteousness, and it is exhilarating and joyful, and followed, as it appears from the next verse, by the subjugation of the wicked. *Calvin's* view is consistent with the whole tenor of the passage.—*Ed.*

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the ungodly prosperous and happy. So also in this place Malachi says, that the *ungodly would be trodden under foot by the faithful like the dust;* and he says this lest the elect, while lying prostrate under the feet of their enemies and proudly trampled upon by them, should succumb under their troubles; but they were to look for what the Prophet declares here, for they were not only to be raised up by the hand of God, but were also to be superior to their enemies, and be enabled in their turn to suppress their pride: in short, he means that they were to be raised above all the height of the world.

At the same time, God does not allow his children cruelly to seek vengeance, for he would have them to be endued with meekness, so as not to cease to do good to the wicked and to pray for them, though they may have been unjustly treated by them. But, as I have already said, he meant here to obviate an evil which is natural to us all, for we are apt to despond when our enemies exult over us, and rage against us. Lest then their temporary success and prosperity should dject our minds, God brings a remedy, and strengthens our patience by this consideration,—that the state of things will shortly be changed, so that we shall triumph over the ungodly, who thought us to have been undone a hundred times; God will indeed visit them with extreme shame, because they not only fatuitously boast of their unjust deeds, but also raise up their horns against him.

Let us proceed; he says, *In the day in which I make.*[1] He again restrains their desires, that they might not with too much haste look forward, but wait for the day prefixed by the Lord. We indeed know how great is the importunity of men as to their wishes, and how ardently they seek their accomplishment unless God checks them. Whenever then we speak of the destruction of our enemies, let us remember that we ought to regard the day of the Lord, in which he purposes to execute his judgment. Some, as I have said, give a different version, but the one I have given is the most probable, and is also more generally approved. It now follows—

[1] See note on ch. iii. 17.—*Ed.*

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4. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

4. Memores estote legis Mosis servi mei, quam mandavi ei in Horeb ad totum Israelem, (*nempe,*) statuta et judicia, (*vel,* statutorum et judiciorum.)

This passage has not been clearly and fully explained, because interpreters did not understand the design of Malachi, nor consider the time. We know that before the coming of Christ there was a kind of silence on the part of God, for by not sending Prophets for a time, he designed to stimulate as it were the Jews, so that they might with greater ardour seek Christ. Our Prophet was amongst the very last. As then the Jews were without Prophets, they ought more diligently to have attended to the law, and to have taken a more careful heed to the doctrine of religion contained in it. This is the reason why he now bids them to remember the law of Moses; as though he had said, "Hereafter shall come the time when ye shall be without Prophets, but your remedy shall be the law; attend then carefully to it, and beware lest you should forget it." For men, as soon as God ceases to speak to them even for the shortest time, are carried away after their own inventions, and are ever inclined to vanity, as we abundantly find by experience. Hence Malachi, in order to keep the Jews from wandering, and from thus departing from the pure doctrine of the law, reminds them that they were faithfully and constantly to remember it until the Redeemer came.

If it be asked why he mentions the law only, the answer is obvious, because that saying of Christ is true, that the law and the Prophets were until John. (Matt. iii. 13.) It must yet be observed, that the prophetic office was not separated from the law, for all the prophecies which followed the law were as it were its appendages; so that they included nothing new, but were given that the people might be more fully retained in their obedience to the law. Hence as the Prophets were the interpreters of Moses, it is no wonder that their doctrine was subjected, or as they commonly say, subordinated to the law. The object of the Prophet was to make the Jews attentive to that doctrine which had been delivered to them from above by Moses and the

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Prophets, so as not to depart from it even in the least degree; as though he had said, "God will not now send to you different teachers in succession; there is enough for your instruction in the law: there is no reason on this account that you should change anything in the discipline of the Church. Though God by ceasing to speak to you, may seem to let loose the reins, so as to allow every one to stray and wander in uncertainty after his own imaginations, it is yet not so; for the law is sufficient to guide us, provided we shake not off its yoke, nor through our ingratitude bury the light by which it directs us."

He calls it the *law of Moses*, not because he was its author, but its minister, as also Paul calls the gospel "my gospel," because he was its minister and preacher. At the same time God claims to himself the whole authority, by adding that Moses was his *servant:* we hence conclude that he brought nothing of himself; for the word servant is not to be confined to his vocation only, but also to his fidelity in executing his office. God then honoured Moses with this title, not so much for his own sake, as in order to give sanction to his law, that no one might think that it was a doctrine invented by man.[1] He expresses the same thing still more clearly by saying, that he had committed the law to him on *Horeb;* for this clause clearly asserts that Moses had faithfully discharged his office of a servant; for he brought nothing but what had been committed to him from above, and he delivered it, as they say, from hand to hand. Many give this version, "To whom I committed, in the valley of Horeb, statutes and judgments;" but I approve of the other rendering—that God makes himself here the author of the law, that all the godly might reverently receive it as coming from him. Horeb is Sinai; but they who describe these places say, that a part of the mountain towards the east is called Horeb, and that the other towards the west is called Sinai; but it is still the same mountain.

By saying *To all Israel*, or to the whole of Israel, he con-

[1] "Observe here," says *Henry*, "the honourable mention that is made of Moses, the first writer in the Old Testament, by Malachi the last writer."—*Ed.*

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firms what I have already said—that he had committed to them the law: that the Jews might be the more touched, he expressly says, that the law was given to them, and that this was a singular privilege with which God had favoured them, according to what is said in Ps. cxlvii. 20, "He has not done so to other nations, nor has he manifested to them his judgments." For the nations had not been laid under such obligations as the Jews, to whom God had given his law as a peculiar treasure to his own children. And that no one might claim an exemption, he says, *to the whole of Israel;* as though he had said, "Neither the learned nor the unlearned, neither the rulers nor the common people, can have any excuse, except they all with the greatest care attend to the law, yea, all from the least to the greatest."

What follows may admit of two explanations: for חוקים, *chukim*, and משפטים, *meshephethim*, may be referred to the verb זכרו, *zacaru*, remember; but as he says *which I have committed*, we may take statutes and judgments as explanatory. As to the subject itself, it signifies but little which view we may adopt. There is no doubt but that God by these terms commends his law for its benefits; as though he had said, "The law includes what the Jews ought rightly to observe, even statutes and judgments." We know that other terms are used in Scripture, such as פקודים, *pekudim*, precepts; מצותים, *metsutim*, commandments; and עדותים, *odutim*, testimonies; but here the Prophet is content briefly to remind the Jews that their ingratitude would be less excusable if they departed from the law of God, for this would be openly to reject statutes and judgments; and this is what I have stated, that they were here taught by the Prophet that the doctrine of the law is profitable, in order that they might attend to it more willingly.[1] It follows—

5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

5. Ecce ego mitto vobis Eliam prophetam antequam veniat dies Iehovæ magnus et terribilis.

[1] The first word, "statutes," חקים, means, according to *Marckius*, the moral and the ceremonial laws; and the second, "judgments," משפטים, the civil or judicial laws. We may consider "law" at the beginning of the verse as a general term, comprehending the whole of what was delivered to Moses; and "statutes" and "judgments" as explanatory of what it was. The *Septuagint* render the first "precepts—προστάγματα."—*Ed.*

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The Prophet continues the same subject; for having testified to the Jews, that though God would for a time suspend the course of prophetic teaching, they yet had in the law what was sufficient for salvation, he now promises the renovation of the Church; as though he had said, "The Lord will again unexpectedly utter his voice after a long silence." Isaiah speaks on the same subject, prophesying of the return of the people, when he says, "Comfort ye, comfort my people, will our God say." (Is. xl. 1.) There is an emphatic import in the use of the future tense. So also in this passage, the Prophet declares that prophetic teaching would be again renewed, that when God showed mercy to his people, he would open his mouth, and show that he had been silent, not because he intended to forsake his people, but as we have said, for another end. At the same time he shows that the time would come, when his purpose was to confirm and seal all the prophecies by his only-begotten Son.

This passage has fascinated the Jews so as to think that men rise again; and their resurrection is,—that the souls of men pass into various bodies three or four times. There is indeed such a delirious notion as this held by that nation! We hence see how great is the sottishness of men, when they become alienated from Christ, who is the light of the world and the Sun of Righteousness, as we have lately seen. There is no need to disprove an error so palpable.

But Christ himself took away all doubt on this point, when he said, that John the Baptist was the Elijah, who had been promised; (Matt. xi. 14:) and the thing itself proves this, had not Christ spoken on the subject. And why John the Baptist is called Elijah, I shall explain in a few words. What some say of zeal, I shall say nothing of; and many have sought other likenesses, whom I shall neither follow nor blame. But this likeness seems to me the most suitable of all,—that God intended to raise up John the Baptist for the purpose of restoring his worship, as formerly he had raised up Elijah: for at the time of Elijah, we know, that not only the truth was corrupted and the worship of God vitiated, but that also all religion was almost extinct,

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so that nothing pure and sound remained. At the coming of Christ, though the Jews did not worship idols, but retained some outward form of religion, yet the whole of their religion was spurious, so that that time may truly be compared, on account of its multiplied pollutions, to the age of Elijah. John then was a true successor of Elijah, nor were any of the Prophets so much like John as Elijah: hence justly might his name be transferred to him.

But some one may object and say, that he is here called a prophet, while he yet denied that he was a prophet: to this the answer is obvious,—that John renounced the title of a prophet, that he might not hinder the progress of Christ's teaching: hence he means not in those words that he ran presumptuously without a call, but that he was content to be counted the herald of Christ, so that his teaching might not prevent Christ from being heard alone. Yet Christ declares that he was a prophet, and more than a prophet, and that because his ministry was more excellent than that of a prophet.

He says, *Before shall come the day, great and terrible.* The Prophet seems not here to speak very suitably of Christ's coming; but he now addresses the whole people; and as there were many slothful and tardy, who even despised the favour of God, and others insolent and profane, he speaks not so kindly, but mixes these threatenings. We hence perceive why the Prophet describes the coming of Christ as terrible; he does this, not because Christ was to come to terrify men, but on the contrary, according to what Isaiah says, "The smoking flax he will not extinguish, the shaken reed he will not break; not heard will his voice be in the streets, nor will he raise a clamour." (Is. xlii. 3.) Though then Christ calmly presents himself, as we have before observed, and as soon as he appears to us, he brings an abundant reason for joy; yet the perverseness of that people was such as to constrain the Prophet to use a severe language, according to the manner in which God deals daily with us; when he sees that we have a tasteless palate, he gives us some bitter medicine, so that we may have some relish for his favour. Whenever then we meet with any thing in

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Scripture tending to fill us with terror, let us remember that such a thing is announced, because we are either deaf or slothful, or even rebellious, when God kindly invites us to himself. It follows—

6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

6. Et convertet cor patrum ad filios, et cor filiorum ad patres; ne forte veniam et percutiam terram anathemate.

This verse may be viewed as containing a simple promise; but I prefer to regard it as including what is between an exhortation and a promise. The first thing is, that God reminds the Jews for what purpose he would send John, even to turn the hearts of men and to restore them to a holy unity of faith. It must therefore be noticed, that not only the Redeemer would come, but that after some intermission, as it has been said, had taken place, the doctrine of salvation would again have its own course, and would be commenced by John.

Yet the Prophet seems here to concede to men more than what is right, for the turning of the heart is God's peculiar work, and still more, it is more peculiarly his than his other works; and if no one can change a hair on the head of his brother, how can he renew his heart, so as to make him a new man? It is at the same time of more consequence to be regenerated than to be created and to be made only the inhabitants of this world. John then seems to be here too highly extolled, when the turning of the heart is ascribed to him. The solution of this difficulty may be easily given: when God thus speaks highly of his ministers, the power of his Spirit is not excluded; and he shows how great is the power of truth when he works through it by the secret influence of his Spirit. God sometimes connects himself with his servants, and sometimes separates himself from them: when he connects himself with them, he transfers to them what never ceases to dwell in him; for he never resigns to them his own office, but makes them partakers of it only. And this is the import of such expressions as these, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted: whatsoever ye shall bind on

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earth, shall be bound in heaven," (John xx. 23;) or when, Paul says, that he had begotten the Corinthians, (1 Cor. ii. 15,) he did not claim for himself what he knew only belonged to God, but rather extolled the favour of God as manifested in his ministry, according to what he declares in another place, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) But when God separates himself from his ministers, nothing remains in them: "He who plants is nothing," says Paul in another place, "And he who waters is nothing, but God who gives the increrse." (1 Cor. iii. 7.) When then is it that teachers are co-workers with God? Even when God, ruling them by his Spirit, at the same time blesses their labour, so that it brings forth its fruit.

We now then see that this mode of speaking derogates nothing from God, that is, when the minister is said to turn the hearts of men; for as he implants nothing by his own influence, so God supplies what is necessary that he may fulfil his office.

By saying that he would turn the *hearts of fathers to sons and of sons to fathers*,[1] he points out not a simple union or consent, for men often unite together, and yet God reprobates and hates their union; but the Prophet here has in view the origin of the people, even Abraham and other holy patriarchs. Had he spoken of the Egyptians or the Assyrians, or some other nations, this turning would not have been so wonderful; but when he speaks of the holy and chosen race, it is no wonder that he mentions it as an instance of the ineffable kindness of God, that they were all to be gathered and restored from discord to unity, so as to become united in one faith.

Since their mutual consent is the subject, we must come

[1] *Newcome's* version is different,

That he may convert the heart of the fathers together with the children,
And the heart of the children together with their fathers.

This is inconsistent with the passage partially quoted in Luke i. 17, and also with the *Septuagint* version, which is as follows—

Who shall restore the heart of the father to the son,
And the heart of a man to his neighbour.

Internal discord was a prevailing evil among the Jews. What is here promised is union and concord as the effect of the ministry of the second Elijah; but it is announced in terms suitable to a single family.—*Ed.*

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to the fountain ; for Malachi takes it for granted, that there was formerly true religion in that people, that the true worship of God prevailed among them, and that they were bound together by a sacred bond ; but since in course of time various notions rose among them, yea, monstrous dotages, since sincerity had become wholly corrupted, he now recalls them to their first condition, so that sons might unite in sentiment with their fathers, and fathers also with their sons, and become one in that faith which had been delivered in the law.

Were any to object and say, that it was not reasonable that fathers should join themselves to their apostate sons, for this would be to approve of their defection, I answer, that there have been some converted young men who have shown the right way to their fathers, and have carried light before them. We indeed know that old men, as they are morose, not only reject what they hear from the young, but are rendered more obstinate, because they are ashamed to learn. Such a dispute the Prophet bids to be dismissed, so that all might in their heart think only the same thing in the Lord.

Lest I come and smite the land with a curse. Here again the Prophet threatens the Jews, and indeed vehemently. He was constrained, as we have said, by necessity, for the torpor of that people was very great, and many of them were hardened in their perverseness. This is the reason why God now declares, that the Jews would not escape unpunished for despising the coming of Christ. And we are at the same time reminded how abominable in the sight of God is the ingratitude of not receiving his Son whom he sends to us. If we wish to derive benefit from what the Prophet teaches us, we ought especially to welcome Christ, while he so kindly calls us, yea, allures us to himself. But if the sloth of our flesh keeps us back, let even this threatening stimulate us ; and as we learn that the sin of not embracing Christ when he offers himself to us, shall not go unpunished, let us struggle against our tardiness. At all events, let us take heed to kiss the Son, as in Ps. ii. 12, we are exhorted to do.

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as nothing is omitted by thee to help us onward in the course of our faith, and as our sloth is such that we hardly advance one step though stimulated by thee,—O grant, that we may strive to profit more by the various helps which thou hast provided for us, so that the Law, the Prophets, the voice of John the Baptist, and especially the doctrine of thine only-begotten Son, may more fully awaken us, that we may not only hasten to him, but also proceed constantly in our course, and persevere in it until we shall at length obtain the victory and the crown of our calling, as thou hast promised an eternal inheritance in heaven to all who faint not but wait for the coming of the great Redeemer.—Amen.

THE END OF ALL THE LECTURES OF JOHN CALVIN ON THE MINOR PROPHETS.

Τῳ Θεῳ δοξα.

TO GOD THE GLORY

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QUID CRUX CUI FLEXU SINUOSO INVOLVITUR ANGUIS,
UNCAQUE QUID SIBI VULT ANCHORA JUNCTA CRUCI?
UNA VELUT MEDICINA FUIT MORIENTIBUS ANGUIS
ÆREUS IMPOSITUS MOSE JUBENTE CRUCI:
SIC PARIT ÆTERNAM CHRISTI CRUX UNA SALUTEM,
IACTATOSQUE MALIS ANCHORA SOLA FOVET.

WHAT MEANS THE CROSS ROUND WHICH THE SERPENT FOLDS?
WHAT MEANS THE ANCHOR WHICH THE CROSS UPHOLDS?
AS MOSES' BRAZEN SERPENT REARED ON HIGH,
DID HEAL ALL SUCH AS READY WERE TO DIE;
SO IS THE CROSS OF CHRIST LIFE TO THE LOST,
AN ANCHOR TOO TO ALL BY TEMPESTS TOST.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION

OF

THE PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI.

AS MODIFIED BY

HIS COMMENTARIES.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION

OF

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

CHAPTER I.

1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came
the word of Jehovah to Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, the
son of Iddo, the Prophet, saying—

2 Very angry has Jehovah been with your fathers:
3 Thou shalt therefore say to them,—
Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Return ye to me, saith Jehovah of hosts;
And I will return to you, saith Jehovah of hosts:
4 Be ye not like your fathers,
For cry to them did the former Prophets, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
" Return ye, I pray, from your evil ways,
And from your evil works;"
But they heard not, nor attended to me,
Saith Jehovah.

5 Your fathers—where are they?
And the Prophets—do they for ever live?
6 But my words and my statutes,
Which I committed to my servants the Prophets,
Have they not laid hold on your fathers?—

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When they returned, they said,—
" As Jehovah of hosts had purposed to do to us
According to our ways and our works,
So hath he done to us."

7 On the twenty-fourth of the eleventh month, the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah to Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo, the Prophet, saying,—

8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding on a red horse; and he stood among the myrtles in a low place; and after him were horses, red, variegated, and white. 9 And I said, What are these, my Lord? And the Angel, who spoke with me, said to me, I will show thee what these are. 10 And the Angel, who stood among the myrtles, answered and said, These are they whom Jehovah has sent to walk to and fro through the earth. 11 And they answered the angel of Jehovah, who stood among the myrtles, and said—" We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, the whole earth rests and is quiet."

12 And the Angel of Jehovah answered and said,
Jehovah of hosts!
How long wilt thou not pity Jerusalem
And the cities of Judah,
Which thou hast despised these seventy years! (42)

13 Then answered Jehovah the Angel, who spoke with me, with good words, with comfortable words. 14 And the Angel, who spoke with me, said to me, Cry, saying,—

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
I am zealous for Jerusalem
And for Sion, with great zeal: (44)
15 And with great anger am I angry
With the nations which are quiet;
For I was angry a little,
And they helped on the evil.

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16 Therefore thus saith Jehovah,—
I am turned to Jerusalem in compassions;
My house shall be built in it,
Saith Jehovah of hosts;
And a line shall be extended over Jerusalem

17 Cry again, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Yet wear out shall cities through abundance, (51)
And Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion,
And will yet choose Jerusalem.

18 And I raised my eyes and saw, and behold four horns;
19 and I said to the angel, who was speaking with me, What are these? and he said to me, These are the four horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. 20 Then Jehovah showed me four smiths: 21 and I said, What are these coming to do? and he said, saying, Those are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no one could raise up his head; but these are come to frighten them, to thrust away the horns of the nations, which raised the horn against the land of Judah to scatter it. (57)

CHAPTER II.

1 And I raised my eyes and saw, and behold a man in whose hand was a measuring-line: 2 and I said, Where art thou going? and he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, that I may see what is its breadth, and what is its length. 3 And behold the angel who was speaking with me, he went forth, and another angel went forth to meet him, and said to him, 4 Run, speak to this youth, saying,—

In the villages shall dwell Jerusalem,
For the number of men and cattle in it:
5 And I shall be to it, saith Jehovah,
A wall of fire round about,
And for glory shall I be in the midst of it

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6 Ho! Ho! flee ye
From the land of the north, saith Jehovah:
For to the four winds of heaven
Have I scattered you, saith Jehovah. (65)
7 Ho! Zion! be thou delivered,
Who dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.
8 For thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
After the glory hath he sent me
To the nations which spoiled you:
For he who touches you
Touches the apple of his eye.
9 For, behold, I shake my hand over them,
And they shall be a prey to their servants;
And ye shall know
That Jehovah of hosts hath sent me.
10 Exult and rejoice, thou daughter of Zion;
For behold I am coming,
And will dwell in thy midst, saith Jehovah:
11 And join themselves shall many nations
To Jehovah in that day;
And they shall be to me a people,
And I will dwell in the midst of thee;
And thou shalt know,
That Jehovah of hosts has sent me to thee:
12 And Jehovah will take Judah
As his hereditary portion in the holy land;
And he will yet choose Jerusalem.
Be silent all flesh before Jehovah;
For roused he is from his holy habitation.

CHAPTER III.

1 And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And Jehovah said to Satan,—

Rebuke thee, Satan, let Jehovah;
Yea, rebuke thee let Jehovah,

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Who has chosen Jerusalem:
Is not this a brand snatched from the fire!

3 And Joshua was clad in sordid garments, and stood before the angel: 4 and he answered and said to those who stood before him, saying, Take the sordid garments from off him: and he said to him, See I have made to pass from thee thine iniquity, and I will clothe thee with new garments. 5 And I said, Let them set a pure mitre on his head: and they set a mitre on his head when they had clothed him with garments; and the angel of Jehovah stood by: 6 and protest did the angel of Jehovah to Joshua, saying,—

7 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
If in my ways wilt thou walk,
And my charge wilt thou keep,
Thou shalt then rule my house,
And thou shalt also keep my courts;
And I will give thee a free intercourse
Among those who are present. (94)
8 Hear now, O Joshua! the high priest,
Thou and thy associates who stand before thee;
For men of wonder are these;
For, behold, I will bring forth my servant, the Branch:
9 For, behold, the stone which I have set before Joshua,
On that one stone are seven eyes;
Behold, I will engrave its engraving,
Saith Jehovah of hosts;
And I will remove the iniquity
Of that land in one day:
10 In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
Ye shall call, every one his neighbour,
Under the vine and under the figtree. (101)

CHAPTER IV.

1 And return did the angel who had been speaking with me, and roused me as a man who is roused from his sleep: 2 and

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he said to me, What dost thou see? and I said, I see and behold a candlestick, all of gold, and a bowl on its top, and seven lamps on it, seven pourers to the seven lamps, which are on its top, [3] and two olive-trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left. [4] Then I answered and said to the angel who was speaking with me, saying, What are these, my Lord? [5] And the angel who was speaking with me, answered and said to me, Knowest thou not? and I said, No, my Lord. [6] And he answered and said to me, saying,—

Not by a host, and not by courage,
But by my Spirit, (110)
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
[7] What art thou, great mountain,
Before Zerubbabel?—A plain:
And he shall bring forth the top-stone,
With shoutings, "Grace, grace to it."

[8] Then came the word of Jehovah to me, saying,—

[9] The hands of Zerubbabel have founded this house,
And his hands shall complete it;
And thou shalt know
That Jehovah of hosts has sent me to you.
[10] For who has despised the day of small things!
For they shall rejoice when they see
The plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.—
These seven, the eyes of Jehovah are they,
Which go round through the whole earth.

[11] And I answered and said to him, What are these two olive-trees on the right of the candlestick, and on its left? [12] And I answered the second time and said, What are these two flowings of the olive-trees, which are between the two pipes of gold, which pour golden oil from themselves? [13] And he said to me, saying, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my Lord. [14] And he said, These are the two sons of oil which stand with the Lord of the whole earth.

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CHAPTER V.

1 And I returned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold a flying roll. 2 And he said to me, What dost thou see? And I said, I see a flying roll, its length twenty cubits, and its breadth ten cubits. 3 And he said to me, This is the curse which goeth forth over the face of the whole land; for every one who steals shall on this as on that side be punished, and every one who swears shall on this as on that side be punished. (129.) 4 I will bring it forth, saith Jehovah of hosts; and it shall come into the house of the thief, and into the house of him who swears by my name falsely; and it shall abide in the midst of his house and consume it, both its timber and its stones.

5 And the angel who had been speaking with me came forth and said to me, Raise now thine eyes, and see what this is that goeth forth. 6 And I said, What is this? And he said, This is a measure which goeth forth: he said also, This is their eye through all the earth. 7 And behold, a thin piece of lead was carried along, and a woman was sitting in the midst of the measure. 8 And he said, This is Wickedness: and he cast the piece of lead on its mouth. 9 And I raised my eyes and saw, and behold two women going forth, and wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they raised up the measure between earth and heaven. 10 And I said to the angel who was speaking with me, Where do these carry the measure? 11 And he said to me, To build for it a house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be set and fixed there on its own base.

CHAPTER VI.

1 And I turned and raised mine eyes and looked, and behold four chariots going forth from the midst of two mountains, and the mountains *were* mountains of brass: 2 in the first chariot were red horses, and in the second chariot black horses, 3 and in the third chariot white horses, and in the

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fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. 4 And I answered and said to the angel who was speaking with me, What are these, my Lord? 5 And the angel answered and said to me, These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth from their station before the Lord of the whole earth; 6 and the black horses go forth to the land of the north, and the white go forth after them, and the grisled go forth to the land of the south. 7 When the bay went forth, they asked that they might perambulate through the earth: and they perambulated through the earth. 8 And he called me, and spoke to me, saying, See, those who went forth to the land of the north have quieted my spirit in the land of the north.

9 And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, 10 Take from the exiles, from Heldai, and from Tobiah, and from Jedaiah (and go in that day into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah) who have come from Babylon; 11 yea, take *from them* silver and gold and make crowns, (154,) and set *them* on the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high-priest; 12 and speak to him, saying,—

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, saying,—
Behold the man! Branch is his name;
And from his own place shall he grow up,
And shall build the temple of Jehovah;
13 Yea, he shall build the temple of Jehovah,
And shall himself bear the glory,
And shall sit and rule on his throne,
And shall be a priest on his throne,
And the counsel of peace shall be between the two.
14 And the crowns shall be to Heldai and to Tobiah,
And to Jedaiah, and to Hen, the son of Zephaniah,
For a memorial in the temple of Jehovah.
15 And those afar off shall come and build
In the temple of Jehovah;
And ye shall know
That Jehovah of hosts has sent me to you:
And *thus* shall it be, if by hearing ye will hear
The voice of Jehovah your God.

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CHAPTER VII.

1 And in the fourth year of king Darius the word of Jehovah came to Zechariah, on the fourth day of the ninth month, even Chisleu: 2 For Sherezer had sent to the house of God, and also Regemmelech and his men, to entreat the favour of Jehovah, 3 *and* to speak to the priests who were in the house of Jehovah of hosts, and to the Prophets, saying, "Shall I weep in the fifth month? Shall I separate myself as I have done these years?" 4 And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying,—(165)

5 Speak to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying,—When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, did you by fasting fast to me—to me? 6 And when ye ate and when ye drank, did you not eat and drink for yourselves? 7 Are not these the words which Jehovah proclaimed by the former Prophets, when Jerusalem was quiet and wealthy, and its cities around it, *when* both the south and the plain country were quiet?

8 And the word of Jehovah came to Zechariah, saying,—

9 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, saying,—
The judgment of truth pronounce,
And kindness and mercies show,
Every one to his brother;
10 And the widow and the orphan,
The stranger and the poor, rob not;
An evil to his brother
Let none of you imagine in his heart:
11 But they refused to attend,
And presented the withdrawing shoulder,
And their ears they made heavy so as not to hear;
12 And their heart they made an adamant,
That they might not hear the words
Which Jehovah of hosts had sent
By his Spirit, through the former prophets;

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And there was great wrath from Jehovah of hosts:
13 And it was, that as he had called and they heard not,
So they shall call, and I will not hear,
Saith Jehovah of hosts;
14 And I will scatter them among all the nations,
Whom they have not known,
And the land shall be desolate after them,
So that there shall be none passing through nor returning:
And they made the land of delight a waste.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 And the word of Jehovah of hosts came, saying,—

2 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Zealous have I been for Zion with great zeal,
And with great indignation have I been zealous for her.
3 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
I am returned to Zion and will dwell
In the midst of Jerusalem;
And called shall be Jerusalem, "The city of truth,"
And the mount of Jehovah of hosts,
"The mount of holiness."

4 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Yet dwell shall aged men and aged women
In the streets of Jerusalem,
Each one with his staff in his hand for very age;
5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls,
Who shall play in its streets.

6 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
If marvellous it be
In the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,
Shall it also in mine eyes be marvellous?
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

7 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—

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Behold, I will save my people
From the land of the east
And from the land of the setting sun ;
8 And I will restore them,
And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem ;
And they shall be to me a people,
And I will be to them a God,
In truth and in righteousness.

9 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Strengthened be your hands,
Who hear in these days these words
From the mouth of the prophets,
Who were in the day when founded
Was the house of Jehovah of hosts,
And the temple, that it might be built.
10 For before those days
There was no hire for man, and no hire for beast ;
And to the goer and to the comer,
There was no peace because of distress ; (207)
And I sent forth all men,
Each one against his neighbour.
11 But now, not according to former days,
Shall I *deal* with the residue of this people,
Saith Jehovah of hosts :
12 For the seed shall be prosperous ;
The vine shall yield its fruit,
And the earth shall yield its increase,
And the heavens shall give their dew ;
Yea, I will cause the remnant of this people
To inherit all these things. (210)
13 And it shall be, that as ye were a curse among the nations,
O house of Judah and house of Israel,
So will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing ;
Fear not, strengthened be your hands.

14 For thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
As I thought to bring evil on you,
When provoke me did your fathers,

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Saith Jehovah of hosts,
And I did not repent;
15 So have I turned, I have thought in these days
To do good to Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah, fear ye not.
16 These are the things which ye shall do,—
Speak ye the truth, each one to his neighbour;
The truth and the judgment of peace
Proclaim in your gates;
17 And evil to his neighbour
Let none of you imagine in your hearts;
And a false oath love not;
For all these things I hate, saith Jehovah.

18 And the word of Jehovah of hosts came to me, saying,—
19 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
The fast of the fourth, and the fast of the fifth,
And the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth *month*,
Shall be to the house of Judah
For joy, and gladness, and cheerful feasts;
Therefore love ye truth and peace. (223)

20 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
It *shall* yet *be*, that come shall people
And the inhabitants of great cities;
21 Yea, come shall the inhabitants
Of one to another, saying,—
"Going let us go to entreat the face of Jehovah,
And to seek Jehovah of hosts, I will also go:"
22 Yea, come shall great and strong nations
To seek Jehovah of hosts at Jerusalem,
And to entreat the face of Jehovah.

23 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
In those days *shall it be*,
That ten men, of all languages of the nations,
Shall lay hold on the skirt of a Jew, saying,—
"We will walk with you,
For we have heard that God is with you."

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CHAPTER IX.

[1] The burden of the word of Jehovah
On the land of Hadrach,
And Damascus its resting-place,
When to Jehovah shall be the eye of man
And of all the tribes of Israel:
[2] Even Hamath shall border on it,
Tyre *also* and Sidon,
Though it be very wise:
[3] And built hath Tyre a fortress for herself,
And heaped together silver as dust,
And gold as the mire of the streets;
[4] Behold, Jehovah will drive her out,
And smite in the sea her power,
And with fire shall she be consumed. (239)
[5] See shall Ashkelon, and fear,
And Gaza,—and it will be very sorrowful;
Ekron also,—for confounded shall be her expectation:
And perish shall the king from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited;
[6] And dwell shall a stranger in Ashdod,
For I will cut off the pride of the Philistines;
[7] And take away will I his blood from his mouth
And his abominations from between his teeth;
And he, the remnant, even he *shall be* for our God;
He shall be even as a leader in Judah,
And Ekron, as a Jebusite:
[8] I will also be a camp to my house
From an army, when passing through and returning;
And pass through them shall the exactor no more;
For now I have seen with mine eyes.

[9] Exult greatly, thou daughter of Zion,
Shout, thou daughter of Jerusalem;
Behold, thy King shall come to thee,
Just and saved shall he be,
Poor and riding on an ass,

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Even on a colt, the foal of an ass:
10 And cut off shall I the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem;
Cut off also shall be the bow of war;
And speak peace shall he to the nations;
And his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
And from the river to the extremities of the earth.

11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant,
Have I sent forth thy captives
From the pit, in which there was no water:
12 Return to the stronghold, ye captives of hope;
Even to day I declare,
Double blessings will I render to thee;
13 For I will bend for me Judah as a bow,
I will fill *my quiver with* Ephraim;
And will rouse thy sons, O Zion,
Against thy sons, O Greece;
And I will make thee as the sword of a mighty man:
14 Jehovah also shall over them be seen,
And go forth as lightning shall his arrow;
Yea, the Lord Jehovah, with the trumpet shall he blow,
And march forth in the whirlwind of the south. (269)
15 Jehovah of hosts will defend them,
And they shall devour and subdue with sling-stones;
They shall also drink and make a noise as through wine,
And filled shall they be as the bowls,
As the corners of the altar;
16 And save them shall Jehovah their God,
In that day, as a flock, his own people;
For as the stones of a crown shall they be raised over his land.
17 For how great is his goodness!
And how great his beauty!
Corn shall refresh young men,
And new wine the maids. (276)

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CHAPTER X.

1 Ask ye from Jehovah rain in the latter season;
And Jehovah will make clouds;
And rain—a shower, will he give them,
To every one grass in the field. (279)
2 Surely the images have spoken vanity,
And the diviners have seen falsehood,
And dreams of vanity have they spoken;
In vain have they comforted:
They have therefore wandered like sheep,
They were distressed, for there was no shepherd.
3 Against the shepherds was my fury kindled,
The he-goats will I punish;
For visit will Jehovah of hosts
His flock, the house of Judah,
And make them as his splendid horse in war.
4 From him shall come forth the corner-stone,
From him the nail,
From him the bow of war,
From him also every exactor. (286)
5 And they shall be as mighty men,
Treading down *their enemies*
In the mire of the streets in battle;
And they shall fight, for Jehovah will be with them;
And ashamed shall be the riders on horses.

6 I will also strengthen the house of Judah,
And the house of Joseph will I save,
And cause them to return and dwell;
For I have pitied them, and they shall be
As though I had not cast them away;
For I Jehovah am their God,
And I will hear them:
7 And they shall be as a mighty man, *even* Ephraim;
And rejoice shall their heart as through wine;
Their sons also shall see and rejoice,
Exult shall their heart in Jehovah.

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8 I will whistle for them and gather them:
For I have redeemed them,
And they shall increase as they had increased.
9 Sow them also will I among the people,
And in distant lands will they remember me,
And they shall live with their sons and return;
10 Yea, I will restore them from the land of Egypt,
And from Assyria will I gather them,
And to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them,
And no *place* shall be found for them. (196)
11 And spread shall distress over the sea,
For he will smite in the sea the waves,
And dry up shall the depths of the river;
Yea, cast down shall be the pride of Assyria,
And the sceptre of Egypt shall depart.
12 I will also strengthen them in Jehovah;
And in his name shall they walk, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER XI.

1 Open, Lebanon, thy doors,
That consume may the fire thy cedars:
2 Howl, thou fir-tree,
For the cedar has fallen,
For the strong has been laid waste:
Howl, ye oaks of Bashan,
For fallen has the fortified forest.
3 The voice of the howling of shepherds!
For wasted is their excellency;
The voice of the roaring of lions!
For laid waste is the pride of Jordan.

4 Thus saith Jehovah my God,—
Feed the flock of slaughter:
5 They who possess them, slay them,
And consider not that they sin;
And he who sells them, says,—
"Blessed be Jehovah, for I am enriched;"

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Yea, he who feeds them spares them not.
6 Surely I will no more spare
The inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah;
And behold, I will deliver every man
Into the hand of his neighbour,
And into the hand of his king;
And smite shall they the land,
And I will not deliver it from their hand.

7 And I fed the flock of slaughter, especially the poor of the flock; and I took to me two rods; the one I called "Beauty," and the other I called "Cords;" and I fed the flock: 8 And I rejected three shepherds in one month: and wearied was my soul with them, and their soul also hated me: 9 And I said,—

I will not feed you;
What is to die, let it die,
What is to be cast off, let it be cast off,
And those which remain, let them devour,
Every one the flesh of another.

10 And I took my rod "Beauty," and broke it, that broken might be the covenant which I had made with all the people: 11 And it was broken in that day; and so the poor of the flock, who attended to me, knew that it was the word of Jehovah. 12 Then I said to them, "If it be good in your eyes, give me my reward; if not, forbear:" and they weighed *as* my reward thirty silverings. 13 And Jehovah said to me, "Cast it to the potter, the magnificent price at which I have been valued by them!" And I took the thirty silverings and cast them into the temple of Jehovah to the potter. 14 Then I broke my other rod, "Cords," that broken might be the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15 And Jehovah said to me, take again to thee the implements of a foolish shepherd;—

16 For behold, I will raise up a shepherd in the land;

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What is cut off he will not visit,
What is young he will not seek,
What is broken he will not heal,
What stands sound he will not feed;
But the flesh of the fat he will devour,
And their hoofs will he break.—
17 Woe to the worthless shepherd!
Who forsakes the flock;
The sword shall be on his arm
And on his right eye; (336)
His arm by drying shall dry up,
And his right eye by contracting shall be contracted.

CHAPTER XII.

1 The burden of the word of Jehovah on Israel;—

Say does Jehovah,
Who expanded the heavens, and founded the earth,
And formed the spirit of man within him,—
2 Behold, I make Jerusalem
A threshold of bruising to all the people around;
And as to Judah, *so* shall he be
During the siege against Jerusalem. (344)
3 It shall also be in that day
That I will make Jerusalem
A burdensome stone to all people;
Whosoever will lift it shall be cut in pieces,
Though assembled against it
Should be all the nations of the earth. (345)

4 In that day, saith Jehovah,
I will smite every horse with stupor,
And its rider with madness;
And on the house of Judah I will open mine eyes;
And every horse of the people
Will I smite with blindness:
5 And say will the chiefs of Judah in their hearts,—

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"Strength to me *are* the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Through Jehovah of hosts their God." (349)

6 In that day I will make the chiefs of Judah
Like a pot of fire among wood;
And like a torch of fire in a sheaf,
And they shall consume, on the right hand
And on the left, all the nations around;
And inhabited shall be Jerusalem,
In her own place, in Jerusalem:
7 And save shall Jehovah
The tents of Judah *as* at the beginning;
And thus the honour of the house of David,
And the honour of the citizen of Jerusalem,
Shall not exult over Judah. (354)

8 In that day Jehovah will protect
The inhabitant of Jerusalem;
And the feeble among them shall be like David,
And the house of David like angels, (357)
As the angel of Jehovah before their face.
9 And it shall be in that day,
That I will seek to destroy all the nations
Who shall come against Jerusalem:
10 And I will pour upon the house of David,
And upon the inhabitant of Jerusalem,
The spirit of grace and of lamentations;
And they shall look to me whom they have pierced:
And lament shall they for him,
As with a lamentation for an only-begotten;
And bitter shall they be for him,
As with a bitterness for a first-born.

11 In that day great shall be the lamentation in Jerusalem,
Like the lamentation of Hadadrimmon
In the valley of Megiddon:
12 And lament shall the land,
Every family apart;
The family of the house of David apart,

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And their wives apart;
The family of the house of Nathan apart,
And their wives apart;
18 The family of the house of Levi apart,
And their wives apart;
The family of Shimei apart,
And their wives apart;
14 All the remaining families,
Every family apart,
And their wives apart.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 In that day shall a fountain be opened
To the house of David
And to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
For expiation and for sprinkling.

2 And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah,
That I will cut off the names of idols from the land,
And they shall be remembered no more;
And the prophets also and the unclean spirit
Will I exterminate from the land.
3 And it shall be, when prophesy yet shall any one,
That say to him will his father and his mother,
Who begat him, "Thou shalt not live,
For a lie hast thou spoken in Jehovah's name;"
And they shall pierce him,
Even his father and his mother who begat him;
Because he had prophesied.

4 It shall also be in that day
That ashamed shall be the prophets,
Every one of his vision, when he has prophesied;
And they shall not wear a hairy garment,
That they may deceive:
5 But he shall say, "I am not a prophet,
A husbandman am I, for man has taught me

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To be a shepherd from my youth."
6 When *one* shall say to him,
"Why are these wounds in thine hands?"
Then he will say, "Because I have been stricken
In the house of my friends." (393)

7 O sword! awake against my shepherd,
And against the man, my associate,
Saith Jehovah of hosts:
Smite the shepherd, and scattered shall be the sheep;
And I will turn my hand to the little ones.
8 And it shall be in all the land, saith Jehovah,
That two parts in it shall be cut off—shall die,
And that the third shall remain in it:
9 And I will bring the third part through the fire,
And will melt them as silver is melted,
And try them as gold is tried;
They shall call on my name and I will answer them;
I will say, "My people are they;"
And they will say, "Jehovah is our God."

CHAPTER XIV.

1 Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh!
And divided shall be thy spoils in the midst of thee:
2 For I will gather all nations
Against Jerusalem for war;
And taken shall be the city
And plundered shall be the houses,
And the women shall be ravished;
And go forth shall half of the city into exile;
And the residue of the people
Shall not be cut off from the city.
3 And go forth shall Jehovah;
And he will fight against these nations,
As in the day when he fought in the day of battle:
4 And stand shall his feet in that day
On the mount of Olives,

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Which is nigh Jerusalem on the east;
And rent shall be the mount of Olives in the middle,
From east to west there *shall be* a great valley;[1]
And recede shall half of the mount to the north
And half of it to the south:
5 And ye shall flee through the valley of the mountains,
For reach shall the valley of the mountains to **Azal**;
And ye shall flee as ye fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah:
And come shall Jehovah my God;—
All the saints *shall be* with thee. (416)

6 And it shall be, that in that day
There shall not be clear light nor thick darkness;
7 But it shall be one day, known to Jehovah,
Neither day nor night;
But it shall be, that in the evening
There will be light.

8 And it shall be in that day
That go forth shall living waters from Jerusalem;
Half of them towards the eastern sea,
And half of them towards the western sea;
In summer and winter shall they be:
9 And Jehovah shall be king over the whole earth;
In that day there shall be one Jehovah,
And his name *shall be* one.
10 Turned shall be the whole land to a plain,
From Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem;
And raised shall it be and inhabited in its own place,
From the gate of Benjamin,
To the place of the first gate, to the gate of the corners,
And from the citadel of Hananeel,
To the wine-vats of the king.
11 And they shall dwell in it,
And there shall be no more utter destruction;

[1] This is somewhat different from the version of *Calvin*, which I am not able to follow; I have therefore given what I conceive to be a literal rendering of the Original.—*Ed.*

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And inhabited shall be Jerusalem in safety.
12 And this shall be the plague,
With which Jehovah shall smite all the people,
Who shall fight against Jerusalem;—
Melt away shall their flesh,
While they stand on their feet,
And their eyes shall melt away in their sockets,
Their tongue also shall melt away in their mouth.
13 And it shall be, that in that day
A great tumult from Jehovah shall be among them,
And lay hold shall each one
On the hand of his companion,
And rise up shall his hand
Against the hand of his neighbour.
14 And even Judah shall fight against Jerusalem,
And collected shall be the forces of all nations around,
Gold *also* and silver and garments in great abundance.
15 And the plague of the horse, mule, camel, and ass,
And of every beast which shall be in their camps,
Shall be even as this plague.

16 And it shall be, that every one who shall remain,
Of all the nations which shall come against Jerusalem,
Shall ascend from year to year
To worship the king, Jehovah of hosts,
And to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.
17 And it shall be as to those who will not ascend,
Of the families of the earth unto Jerusalem,
To worship the king, Jehovah of hosts,
That upon them there shall not be rain:
18 And if the family of Egypt shall not ascend and come,
It shall not be on them; (447)
There shall also be the plague,
With which Jehovah shall smite all the nations,
Who shall not ascend
To celebrate the feast of tabernacles.
19 Such will be the punishment of Egypt,
And the punishment of all the nations,
Which will not ascend

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To celebrate the feast of tabernacles.
20 In that day there shall be on the blinders of horses,
HOLINESS UNTO JEHOVAH;
And it shall be, that the pots in the house of Jehovah,
Shall be like the vessels before the altar:
21 And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah,
Shall be holiness to Jehovah of hosts;
And come shall all who shall sacrifice,
And take them and seethe in them:
And there shalt not be a Canaanite any more,
In the house of Jehovah of hosts, in that day.

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A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION

OF

THE BOOK OF MALACHI.

CHAPTER I.

1 The burden of the word of Jehovah on Israel, by Malachi,—

2 I have loved you, saith Jehovah;
But ye have said, In what hast thou loved us?
Was not Esau a brother to Jacob? saith Jehovah;
3 Yet I loved Jacob, and Esau I hated:
And I have set his mountains a waste
And his heritage for the serpents of the desert.
4 If Edom shall say, "We have been diminished,
But we shall return and build houses;"
Yet thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
"They shall build, but I will pull down;"
And they shall be called, "The border of ungodliness,"
And, "The people with whom Jehovah is angry forever:"
5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say,—
Magnified let Jehovah be throughout the border of Israel.

6 A son honours his father, and a servant his master:
If then I be a father, where is my honour?
And if I be a master, where is my fear?
Saith Jehovah of hosts to you, priests,
Who despise my name:

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But ye have said, In what have we despised thy name?
7 Ye offer on my altar polluted bread:
Ye have also said, By what have we polluted thee?
When ye say, The table of Jehovah,
It is contemptible.
8 When ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil!
And when the lame and the sick ye offer, it is no evil!
Offer it now I pray to thy governor;
Will he be pleased with thee, or accept
Thy person, saith Jehovah of hosts?
9 And now I pray entreat the favour of God!
And merciful will he be to us!
By your hand has this been done;
Will he regard your persons?
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
10 Who is there even among you who closes the doors?
And do ye not kindle my altar in vain?
I delight not in you, saith Jehovah of hosts,
And an offering I will not receive from your hand.
11 Verily, from the rising of the sun to its setting
Great shall be my name among the nations,
And in every place incense shall be offered
To my name, and a pure offering;
For great shall be my name among the nations,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
12 But ye have profaned it by saying,
The table of Jehovah is polluted,
Its provision is his contemptible food. (505)

13 Ye have also said, Behold weariness?
And ye have snuffed at it, saith Jehovah of hosts;
And offered the torn and the lame and the sick,
And brought an oblation!
Shall I accept this from your hand,
Saith Jehovah? (508)
14 But cursed be the deceitful,
Who, having in his flock a male,
Vows and offers what is corrupt to Jehovah
For a great king am I,

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Saith Jehovah of hosts,
And my name is terrible among the nations.

CHAPTER II.

1 And now to you is this command, O priests;
2 If ye will not hear nor lay it to heart,
To give glory to my name,
Saith Jehovah of hosts,
I will send on you a curse,
And will curse your blessings;
Yea, I have cursed them,
Because ye lay it not to heart.
3 Behold, I will destroy your seed
And scatter dung on your faces,
The dung of your solemn feasts;
And it shall take you to itself:
And ye shall know,
4 That I have sent to you this command,
That my covenant may be with Levi,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
5 My covenant with him was that of life and peace;
And I gave him fear, and he feared me,
And before my name he was humble; (524)
6 The law of truth was in his mouth,
And iniquity was not found in his lips;
In peace and uprightness he walked before me,
And many he restored from iniquity.
7 Verily the lips of the priest should keep knowledge,
And the law should they seek from his mouth,
For the messenger of Jehovah of hosts is he:
8 But ye have departed from the way,
To stumble have ye made many in the law;
Ye have therefore violated the covenant of Levi,
Saith Jehovah of hosts:
9 Therefore have I also made you
Contemptible and base before all the people,

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As ye have not kept my ways
And had respect of persons in the law.

10 Is there not one father to us all?
Hath not one God created us?
Why do we deal falsely, every one with his brother?
So as to pollute the covenant of our fathers.
11 Perfidiously has Judah acted,
And abomination has been done
In Israel and in Jerusalem;
For polluted hath Judah (544)
The holiness of Jehovah, which he loved,
And hath married the daughter of another god.
12 Cut off will Jehovah
The man who doeth this,
The prompter and the respondent,
From the tabernacles of Jacob;
And him who bringeth an oblation
To Jehovah of hosts.

13 And this have ye in the second place done—
Covering with tears the altar of Jehovah,
With weeping and with wailing,
Because there is no more regard to the offering,
And no receiving of what is acceptable from your hand.
14 And ye have said, Why is this?
Because Jehovah has been witness
Between thee and the wife of thy youth;
With whom thou hast dealt unfaithfully,
When yet she is thy consort,
And the wife of thy covenant.
15 But did he not make one?
And had he not an exuberance of spirit?
And why one? That he might seek [secure] good seed.
Therefore watch over your spirit;
And with the wife of thy youth
Deal not thou unfaithfully.
16 For if thou hatest, dismiss,
Saith Jehovah, God of Israel;

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For he covers violence with his garment,
Saith Jehovah of hosts:
Therefore watch over your spirit,
And deal not unfaithfully.

17 Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words;
But ye have said, How have we wearied him?
By saying, Whosoever doeth evil
Is acceptable in the eyes of Jehovah,
And in them he takes delight;
Or, Where is the God of judgment?

CHAPTER III.

1 Behold I will send my messenger,
And he will clear the way before me:
And presently he shall come to his temple,
The Lord whom ye seek,
Even the messenger of the covenant whom ye desire;
Behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts.
2 But who will endure the day of his coming?
And who will stand when he appears.
For he will be like a purifying fire
And like the herb of the fullers:
3 And he shall sit as the purifier and cleanser of silver,
And he will cleanse the sons of Levi,
And fuse them as silver and gold,
4 That they may offer to Jehovah
An offering in righteousness;
And acceptable to Jehovah
Shall be the offering of Judah and Jerusalem,
As in the days of old, as in former years.

5 I will also draw nigh to you for judgment,
And will be a swift witness
Against the sorcerers and the adulterers
And those who swear to a falsehood,
And who withhold the wages of the hireling,

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And wrong the widow, the orphan, and the stranger,
And who fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts.

6 Because I am Jehovah, I change not;
Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.
7 From the days of your fathers
Ye have turned from my statutes and have not kept them;
Return to me, and I will return to you,
Saith Jehovah of hosts:
But ye have said, How are we to return?
8 Will a man rob the gods? (585)
But ye have robbed me: yet ye have said,
In what have we robbed thee?
In the tithes and in the offerings.
9 With a curse are ye cursed,
For ye have robbed me, the whole of the nation.
10 Bring ye all the tithes to the store-house,
And let there be food in my house;
And prove me now by this,
Saith Jehovah of hosts,
Whether I will not open for you
The windows of heaven,
And draw out for you a blessing,
Until there be a superabundance:
11 I will also restrain for you the devourer,
That he may not destroy the fruit of your land;
And not fruitless will be the vine for you in the field,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
12 Then blessed shall all nations call you,
For ye shall be a land of delight,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

13 Strong against me have been your words,
Saith Jehovah of hosts:
But ye have said, In what have we spoken against thee?
Ye have said, Vain it is to serve God,
14 And what profit is it,
That we have kept his charge,
And that we have walked humbly

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Before Jehovah of hosts:
15 And now happy we call the proud;
Yea, built up are they who do iniquity,
And those who tempt God, and they are delivered.

16 Then spake those who feared Jehovah,
Every one to his friend;
And hearken did Jehovah and hear,
And written was a book of remembrance
Before him, for those who feared Jehovah
And who thought on his name:
17 And they shall be to me, saith Jehovah of hosts,
In the day which I appoint, a peculiar treasure;
And I will spare them,
As a man spares his son who serves him.
18 Then ye shall return and see the difference
Between the righteous and the ungodly,
Between him who serves God
And him who does not serve him.

CHAPTER IV.

1 For behold the day! it comes burning as an oven
And all the proud and all who do iniquity
Shall be stubble;
And burn them up shall the day that is coming,
Saith Jehovah of hosts;
For it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
2 But arise to you, who fear my name,
Shall the sun of righteousness,
With healing in its beams;
And ye shall go forth and leap,
Like fattened calves:
3 And ye shall tread down the ungodly,
For they shall be dust under the soles of your feet,
In the day which I appoint,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

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4 Remember the law of Moses my servant
Which I committed to him on Horeb,
For all Israel, *even* the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold I send to you Elijah the prophet,
Before it comes, the day of Jehovah, great and terrible;
6 And he shall turn the heart of fathers to *their* sons,
And the heart of sons to their fathers;
Lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

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INDICES

TO THE

COMMENTARIES

ON THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

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